

ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ 'ΕΚΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ'.

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DISCOURSE
OF THE
LIBERTY
OF
PROPHESYING.

SHEWING

The Unreasonableness of prescribing
to other Mens FAITH, and the Iniquity
of Persecuting Differing OPINIONS.

By JER. TAYLOR, D. D. Chaplain in
Ordinary to King CHARLES the First, and
sometime Lord Bishop of *Down and Connor*.

The Second Edition, Corrected.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the Assigns of *Luke Meredith*; and are to be Sold by
John Wyatt at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, *John Sprint*
at the *Bell* in *Little-Britain*, and *Philip Monckton* at the *Star*
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. M DCC II.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHRISTOPHER
Lord HATTON,

Baron HATTON of *Kirby*; Comptroller of His Majesty's Household, and one of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

MY LORD,

IN this great Storm which hath dasht the Vessel of the Church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the Coasts of *Wales*, and in a little Boat thought to have enjoyed that rest, and quietness, which in *England* in a greater I could not hope for: Here I cast Anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the Storm followed me with so impetuous violence, that it broke a Cable, and I lost my Anchor: And here again I was exposed to the mercy of the Sea, and the gentleness of an Element that could neither distinguish things nor persons. And

but he who stilleth the raging of the Sea, and the noise of his Waves, and the madness of his people, had provided a Plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my Friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble Enemy: *Οἱ γὰρ βάρβαροι παρείχον ἐτὶ τὴν τυχεῖσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, ἀνάψαντες γὰρ πυρὰν προσελάβοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸ ὑεῖν τὸ ἐφελῶτα καὶ διὰ τὸ ψύχειν.* And now since I have come ashore, I have been gathering a few sticks to warm me, a few Books to entertain my thoughts, and divert them from the perpetual Meditation of my private Troubles, and the publick Dyscrasy, but those which I could obtain were so few and so impertinent, and unuseful to any great purpose, that I began to be sad upon a new stock, and full of apprehension that I should live unprofitably, and die obscurely, and be forgotten, and my bones thrown into some common charnel house, without any name or note to distinguish me from those who only served their Generation by filling the number of Citizens, and who could pretend to no thanks or reward from the Publick beyond a *justitium liberorum*. While I was troubled with these thoughts, and busie to find out an opportunity of doing some good in my small proportion, still the cares of the publick did

so intervene, that it was as impossible to separate my design from relating to the present, as to exempt my self from the participation of the common calamity; still half my thoughts were (in despite of all my diversions and arts of avocation) fixt upon and mingled with the present concerns: so that besides them I could not go. Now because the great Question is concerning Religion, and in that also my Scene lies, I resolved here to fix my considerations, especially when I observed the ways of promoting the several opinions which now are busie, to be such, as besides that they were most troublesome to me, and such as I could by no means be friends withal, they were also such as to my understanding, did the most apparently deserve their ends whose design in advancing their own opinions was pretended for Religion: For as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of Christian Religion: And however that there are some exterminating spirits who think God to delight in humane sacrifices, as if that Oracle — *Καὶ κεφαλὰς ἄδῃ ἢ τῷ πατρὶ πέμπει ρῶτα*, had come from the Father of Spirits, yet if they were capable of cool and tame Homilies, or would hear men of other opinions give a quiet account without invincible resolutions never to alter their persuasions, I am very much persuaded it

would not be very hard to dispute such men into mercies and compliances, and Tolerations mutual, such I say, who are zealous for Jesus Christ; than whose Doctrine never was any thing more merciful and humane, whose lessons were softer than Nard, or the juice of the Candian Olive: upon the first apprehension, I design'd a Discourse to this purpose, with as much greediness as if I had thought it possible with my Arguments to have persuaded the rough and hard handed Souldiers to have disbanded presently: For I had often thought of the Prophecy that in the Gospel, *our Swords shall be turned into plowshares, and our Spears into pruning hooks*; I knew that no tittle spoken by Gods Spirit could return unperform'd and ineffectual, and I was certain, that such was the excellency of Christ's Doctrine, that if men would obey it, Christians should never war one against another: in the mean time I considered not, that it was *prædictio concilij, non eventus*, till I saw what men were now doing, and ever had done since the heats and primitive fervour did cool, and the love of interests swell'd higher than the love of Christianity; but then on the other side, I began to fear that whatever I could say would be as ineffectual, as it could be reasonable: For if those excellent words which our Blessed Master spake, could not charm the tumult of our Spirits, I had little reason to hope that our

The Epistle Dedicatory.

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of the meanest and most ignorant of his servants could advance the end of that which he calls his great, and his old, and his new Commandment, so well as the excellency of his own Spirit and discourses could. And yet since he who knew every event of things, and the success and efficacy of every Doctrine; and that very much of it to most men, and all of it to some men would be ineffectual, yet was pleased to consign our duty that it might be a direction to them that would, and a conviction and a Testimony against them that would not obey, I thought it might not misbecome my duty and endeavours to plead for peace and charity, and forgiveness and permissions mutual, although I had reason to believe that such is the iniquity of men, and they so indisposed to receive such impresses, that I had as good plow the Sands, or till the Air, as persuade such Doctrines, which destroy mens interests, and serve no end but the great end of a happy eternity, and what is in order to it. But because the events of things are in Gods disposition, and I knew them not, and because if I had known my good purposes would be totally ineffectual as to others, yet my own designation and purposes would be of advantage to my self, who might from Gods mercy expect the retribution which he is pleased to promise to all pious intentions; I resolved to encounter with all Ob-

jections, and to do something to which I should be determined by the consideration of the present distemperatures and necessities, by my own thoughts, by the Questions and Scruples, the Sects and Names, the Interests and Animosities which at this day, and for some years past, have exercised and disquieted Christendom.

Thus far I discours'd my self into employment, and having come thus far, I knew not how to get farther, for I had heard of a great experience, how difficult it was to make Brick without Straw, and here I had even seen my design blasted in the bud, and I despaired in the Calends of doing what I purposed in the Ides before: For I had no Books of my own here, nor any in the vicinage, and but that I remembred the result of some of those excellent Discourses, I had heard your Lordship make when I was so happy as in private to gather up what your temperance and modesty, forbids to be publick, I had come *in praelia inermis*, and like enough might have far'd accordingly. I had this only advantage besides; that I have chosen a Subject, in which if my own reason does not abuse me, I needed no other books or aids, than what a man carries with him on horse-back, I mean the common principles of Christianity, and those ἀξιόματα which men use in the transactions of the ordinary occurrences

of civil society; and upon the strength of them and some other collateral assistances I have run through it *utcumque*, and the sum of the following Discourses, is nothing but the sense of these words of Scripture; 1 Cor. 13.

That since we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glass darkly, we should not despise or contemn persons not so knowing as our selves, but him that is weak in the faith we should receive, but not to doubtful disputations; There- Rom. 14.

fore certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to those which are the idle effects of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep close to the foundation, which is Faith and Obedience, let them build upon this foundation matter more or less precious, yet if the foundation be intire, they shall be saved with or without loss. And since we profess our selves servants of so meek a Master, and Disciples of so charitable an Institute, Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowliness and meekness, Ephes. 4. 2, 3.

with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; for this is the best endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, when it is fast tyed in the bond of peace. And although it be a duty of Christianity, that we all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, yet this unity is to be estimated according to

Rom. 14.

to the unity of faith, in things necessary, in matters of Creed and Articles fundamental; for as for other things it is more to be wished than to be hoped for; there are some *doubtful Disputations*, and in such *the Scribe, the Wise, the Disputer of this world*, are most commonly very far from certainty, and many times from truth: There are diversity of persuasions in matters adiaphorous, *as meats and drinks, and holy days, &c.* and both parties, the affirmative and the negative affirm and deny with innocence enough, for *the observer and he that observes not*, intend both to God; and God is our common Master, we all fellow servants, and *not the judge of each other*, in matters of conscience or *doubtful Disputation*: And every man that *hath faith must have it to himself before God*, but no man must either in such matters *judge his brother or set him at nought*; but *let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another*: And the way to do that is

1 Cor. 8. 1. not by knowledge, but by charity, *for knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*; and

Verf. 7. since there is not in every man *the same knowledge, but the conscience of some are weak*; as

1 Cor. 10. 29. *my liberty must not be judged of another mans weak conscience*. So must not I please my self so much in my right opinion, but I must also take order that his *weak conscience be not*

Ibid. *offended or despised*, for no man must seek his

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own but every man anothers wealth: And although we must contend earnestly for the faith, yet above all things we must put on charity which is the bond of perfectness: And therefore this contention must be with arms fit for the Christian warfare, the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of Faith, and preparation of the Gospel of peace, instead of shoes, and a helmet of salvation, but not with other arms, for a Church-man must not be *πληκ-
λυδς*, a striker, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and the persons that use them ought to be gentle, and easy to be intreated, and we must give an account of our Faith to them that ask us with meekness and humility, for so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. These and thousands more to the same purpose are the Doctrines of Christianity, whose sense and intentment I have prosecuted in the following Discourse, being very much displeased that so many opinions and new doctrines are commenc'd among us, but more troubled that every man that hath an opinion thinks his own and other mens salvation is concern'd in its maintenance, but most of all that men should be persecuted and afflicted for disagreeing in such opinions which they cannot with sufficient grounds obtrude upon others necessarily, because they cannot propound them infallibly, and because they have

Colos. 3.
14.

have no warrant from Scripture so to do: For if I shall tye other men to believe my opinion, because I think I have a place of Scripture, which seems to warrant it to my understanding, why may he not serve up another dish to me in the same dress, and exact the same task of me to believe the contradictory: And then since all the Hereticks in the world have offered to prove their Articles by the same means by which true believers propound theirs, it is necessary that some separation either of Doctrine or of persons be clearly made, that all pretences may not be admitted, nor any just Allegations be rejected; and yet that in some other Questions whether they be truly or falsely pretended if not evidently or demonstratively, there may be considerations had to the persons of men and to the Laws of charity more than to the triumphing in any opinion or doctrine not simply necessary, Now because some doctrines are clearly not necessary, and some are absolutely necessary, why may not the first separation be made upon this difference, and Articles necessary be only urg'd as necessary and the rest left to men indifferently, as they were by the Scripture indeterminately. And it were well if men would as much consider themselves as the Doctrines, and think that they may as well be deceiv'd by their own weakness, as persuaded by the

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Arguments of a Doctrine which other men, as wise, call inevident. For it is a hard case that we shall think all Papists and Anabaptists and Sacramentaries to be fools and wicked persons, certainly among all these Sects there are very many wise men and good men, as well as erring; and although some zeals are so hot, and their eyes so inflamed with their ardors, that they do not think their Adversaries look like other men, yet certainly we find by the results of their discourses, and the transactions of their affairs of civil society, that they are men that speak and make syllogisms, and use reason, and read Scripture, and although they do no more understand all of it, than we do, yet they endeavour to understand as much as concerns them, even all that they can, even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And therefore methinks this also should be another consideration distinguishing the persons, for if the persons be Christians in their lives, and Christians in their profession, if they acknowledge the Eternal Son of God for their Master and their Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions, why then should I hate such persons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Christ, and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ,

Christ, and Christ in them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same Masters, they have not met with the same books, nor the same company, or have not the same interest, or are not so wise, or else are wiser, (that is, for some reason or other which I neither do understand, nor ought to blame) have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their School Questions to the sense of my Sect or Interest.

But now I know before-hand, that those men who will endure none but their own Sect, will make all manner of attempts against these purposes of charity and compliance, and say I, or do I what I can, will tell all their Profelytes that I preach indifferency of Religion, that I say it is no matter how we believe, nor what they profess: But that they may comply with all Sects, and do violence to their own consciences, that they may be sav'd in all Religions, and so make way for a *colluvies* of Heresies, and by consequence destroy all Religion. Nay, they will say worse than all this, and but that I am not used to their phrases and forms of declamation, I am persuaded I might represent fine Tragedies before-hand. And this will be such an objection, that although I am most confident I shall make apparent to be as false and scandalous as the Objecters,

Objecters themselves are zealous and impatient; yet besides that, I believe the Objection will come where my answers will not come, or not be understood; I am also confident that in defiance and incuriousness of all that I shall say, some men will persist pertinaciously in the accusation, and deny my conclusion in despite of me: Well, but however I will try.

And first I answer, that whatsoever is against the foundation of Faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to humane society, and the publick and just interests of bodies politick, is out of the limits of my Question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration: So that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those Religions whose principles destroy Government, nor to those Religions (if there be any such) that teach ill life, nor do I think that any thing will now excuse from belief of a fundamental Article, except stupidity or sottishness and natural inhability. This alone is sufficient answer to this vanity, but I have much more to say.

Secondly, The intendment of my Discourse is, that permissions should be in Questions speculative, indeterminable, curious, and unnecessary, and that men would not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many. The fault I find

find and seek to remedy is, that men are so dogmatical and resolute in their opinions, and impatient of others disagreements in those things wherein is no sufficient means of union and determination, but that men should let opinions and problems keep their own forms, and not be obtruded as axioms, nor questions in the vast collection of the system of Divinity, be adopted into the family of Faith: And I think I have reason to desire this.

Thirdly, It is hard to say, that he who would not have men put to death, or punished corporally for such things, for which no humane Authority is sufficient either for cognisance or determination, or competent for infliction, that he persuades to an indifference, when he refers to another Judicatory, which is competent, sufficient, infallible, just, and highly severe. No man or company of men can judge or punish our thoughts, or secret purposes whilst they so remain, and yet it will be unequal to say, that he who owns this Doctrine preaches it lawful to men to think or purpose what they will. And so it is in matters of doubtful disputation (such as are the distinguishing Articles of most of the Sects of Christendom:) So it is in matters intellectual (which are not cognoscible by a secular power) in matters spiritual (which are to be discerned by spiritual Authority, which cannot make corporal

so corporal inflictions) and in Questions indeterminate, which are doubtfully propounded or obscurely, and therefore may be *in utramque partem* disputed or believed; for God alone must be Judge of these matters, who alone is Master of our souls, and hath a dominion over humane understanding, and he that says this, does not say that indifferency is persuaded, because God alone is Judge of erring persons.

Fourthly, No part of this Discourse teaches or encourages variety of Sects, and contradiction in opinions, but supposes them already in being, and therefore since there are, and ever were, and ever will be variety of opinions, because there is variety of humane understandings, and uncertainty in things, no man should be too forward in determining all Questions, nor so forward in prescribing to others, nor invade that liberty which God hath left to us intire, by propounding many things obscurely, and by exempting our souls and understandings from all power externally compulsory: So that the restraint is laid upon mens tyranny, but no license given to mens opinion, they are not considered in any of the Conclusions, but in the premises only as an Argument to exhort to charity. So that if I persuade a license of discrediting any thing which God hath commanded us to believe,

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and allow a liberty where God hath not allowed it, let it be shewn, and let the Objection press as hard as it can; but to say that men are too forward in condemning where God hath declared no sentence nor prescribed any rule; is to dissuade from tyranny, not to encourage licentiousness; is to take away a license of judging, not to give a license of dogmatizing what every one please, or as may best serve his turn. And for the other part of the Objection,

Fifthly, This Discourse is so far from giving leave to men to profess any thing though they believe the contrary, that it takes order that no man shall be put to it, for I earnestly contend that another mans opinion shall be no rule to mine, and that my opinion shall be no snare and prejudice to my self, that men use one another so charitably and so gently, that no error or violence tempt men to hypocrisy, this very thing being one of the Arguments I use to persuade permissions, lest compulsion introduce hypocrisy, and make sincerity troublesome and unsafe.

Sixthly, If men would not call all opinions by the name of Religion and Superstitions by the name of fundamental Articles, and all fancies by the glorious appellation of Faith, this objection would have no pretence or footing, so that it is the disease of the Men, not any cause that is ministered

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stred by such precepts of charity that makes them perpetually clamorous: And it would be hard to say that such Physicians are incurious of their Patients, and neglectful of their health, who speak against the unreasonableness of such Empericks that would cut off a mans head if they see but a Wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man; the case is altogether the same, and we may as well decree a Wart to be mortal as a various opinion in *re alioqui non necessariâ*, to be capital and damnable.

For I consider, that there are but few Doctrines of Christianity, that were ordered to be preached to all the world, to every single person, and made a necessary Article of his explicate belief: Other Doctrines which are all of them not simply necessary, are either such as are not clearly revealed, or such as are: If they be clearly revealed, and that I know so too, or may, but for my own fault, I am not to be excused, but for this I am to be left to Gods judgment, unless my fault be externally such as to be cognoscible and punishable in humane judicatory: But then, if it be not so revealed but that wise men and good men differ in their opinions, it is a clear case, it is not *inter dogmata necessaria simpliciter*, and then it is certain I may therefore safely

disbelieve it, because I may be safely ignorant of it: For if I may with innocence be ignorant, then to know it or believe it, is not simply obligatory; ignorance is absolutely inconsistent with such an obligation, because it is destructive and a plain negative to its performance, and if I do my honest endeavour to understand it, and yet do not attain it, it is certain that is not obligatory to me so much as by accident, for no obligation can press the person of a man if it be impossible, no man is bound to do more than his best, no man is bound to have an excellent understanding, or to be infallible, or to be wiser than he can, for these are things that are not in his choice, and therefore not a matter of a Law, nor subject to reward and punishment; so that where ignorance of the Article is not a sin, there disbelieving it in the right sense, or believing it in the wrong, is no breach of any duty, essentially or accidentally necessary, neither in the thing it self, nor to the person; that is he is neither bound to the Article, nor to any endeavours or antecedent acts of volition and choice, and that man who may safely be ignorant of the proposition, is not tyed at all to search it out, and if not at all to search it, then certainly not to find it: All the obligation we are capable of, is not to be malicious or voluntarily criminal in any kind, and then if by accident

accident we find out a truth, we are obliged to believe it; and so will every wise or good man do; indeed he cannot do otherwise: But if he disbelieves an Article without malice, or design, or involuntarily, or unknowingly, it is contradiction to say it is a sin to him who might totally have been ignorant of it; for that he believes it in the wrong sense, it is his ignorance, and it is impossible that where he hath heartily endeavoured to find out a truth, that this endeavour should make him guilty of a sin, which would never have been laid to his charge, if he had taken no pains at all: His ignorance in this case is not a fault at all; possibly it might, if there had been no endeavour to have cur'd it.

So that there is wholly a mistake in this proposition: For true it is, there are some propositions, which if a man never hear of, they will not be required of him; and they who cannot read might safely be ignorant, that *Melchizedeck* was King of *Salem*; but he who reads it in the Scripture, may not safely contradict it, although before that knowledge did arrive to him, he might safely have been ignorant of it: But this although it be true, is not pertinent to our Question; For *in sensu diviso* this is true, that which at one time a man may be ignorant of, at some other time he may not disbelieve: But *in sensu conjuncto* it is false;

For at what time, and in what circumstance soever it is no sin to be ignorant, at that time and in that conjuncture, it is no sin to disbelieve; and such is the nature of all Questions disputable, which are therefore not required of us to be believed in any one particular sense, because the nature of the thing is such as not to be necessary to be known at all simply and absolutely, and such is the ambiguity and cloud of its face and representment as not to be necessary so much as by accident, and therefore not to the particular sense of any one person.

And yet such is the iniquity of men, that they suck in opinions as wild Asses do the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted air, and then live upon it at a venture, and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and mistake, yet therefore because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction.

But besides that against this I have laid prejudice enough from the dictates of holy Scripture, it is observable that this with its appendant degrees, I mean restraint of Prophecy, imposing upon other mens understanding, being masters of their consciences, and lording it over their Faith, came in with the retinue and train of Antichrist, that is, they came as other abuses and corruptions of the Church did, by reason of the iniquity of times, and the cooling of

the first heats of Christianity, and the encrease of interest, and the abatements of Christian simplicity, when the Churches fortune grew better, and her Sons grew worse, and some of her Fathers worst of all; For in the first three hundred years there was no sign of persecuting any man for his opinion, though at that time there were very horrid opinions commenced, and such which were exemplary and parallel enough to determine this Question; for they then were assaulted by new Sects which destroyed the common principles of nature, of Christianity, of innocence and publick society; and they who used all the means Christian and Spiritual for their disimprovement and conviction, thought not of using corporal force, otherwise than by blaming such proceedings: And therefore I do not only urge their not doing it as an Argument of the unlawfulness of such proceeding, but their defying it and speaking against such practices, as unreasonable and destructive of Christianity: For so *Tertullian* is express, *Humani juris & naturalis potestatis, unicuique quod putaverit colere, sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ suscipi debet sponte non vi*: The same is the Doctrine of *St. Cyprian, Lactantius, St. Hilary, Minutius Felix, Sulpicius Severus, St. Chrysostom, St. Hierom, St. Austin, Damascen, Theophylact, Socrates, Scholasticus, and*

Ad Scapulam.

St. Bernard, as they are severally referr'd to and urg'd upon occasion in the following Discourse.

To which I add, that all wise Princes till they were overborn with faction or solicited by peevish persons, gave Toleration to differing Sects, whose opinions did not disturb the publick interest: But at first, there were some heretical persons that were also impatient of an Adversary, and they were the men who at first entreated the Emperours to persecute the Catholicks; but till four hundred years after Christ, no Catholick persons, or very few, did provoke the secular arm, or implore its aid against the Hereticks, save only that *Arrius* behav'd himself so seditiously and tumultuously, that the *Nicene* Fathers procur'd a temporary Decree for his relegation, but it was soon taken off and God left to be his Judge, who indeed did it to some purpose, when he was trusted with it and the matter wholly left to him.

But as the Ages grew worse, so men grew more cruel and unchristian: And in the Greek Church *Atticus*, and *Nestorius* of *Constantinople*, *Theodosius* of *Synada*, and some few others who had forgotten the mercies of their great Master, and their own duty, grew implacable and furious and impatient of contradiction. It was a bold and an arrogant speech which *Nestorius* made in his
Sermon

Sermon before *Theodosius* the younger, *Da
 mihi, O Imperator, terram ab hæreticis re-
 purgatam, & ego tibi vicissim cælum dabo:
 Disperde mecum hæreticos, & ego tecum dis-
 perdam Persas*: It was as groundless and un-
 warrantable, as it was bloody and inhumane.
 And we see the contrary events prove tru-
 er, than this groundless and unlearned pro-
 mise; for *Theodosius* and *Valentinian* were
 and prosperous Princes, and have to all Ages a
 precious memory, and the reputation of a
 great piety; but they were so far from do-
 ing what *Nestorius* had suggested, that they
 restrained him from his violence and imma-
 nity, and *Theodosius* did highly commend
 the good Bishop *Proclus* for his sweetness of
 deportment towards erring persons, far a-
 bove the cruelty of his Predecessor *Atticus*:
 And the experience which Christendom
 hath had in this last Age is argument e-
 nough, that Toleration of differing opini-
 ons is so far from disturbing the publick
 peace, or destroying the interest of Princes
 and Common-Wealths, that it does advan-
 tage to the publick, it secures peace, because
 there is not so much as the pretence of Reli-
 gion left to such persons to contend for it, be-
 ing already indulged to them. When *France*
 fought against the *Hugonots*, the spilling of
 her own Blood was argument enough of the
 imprudence of that way of promoting Reli-
 gion; but since she hath given permission
 to

to them, the World is witness how prosperous she hath been ever since: But the great instance is in the differing temper, Government and success which *Margaret of Parma* and the Duke of *Alva* had: The clemency of the first had almost extinguish'd the flame; but when she was removed, *D'Alva* succeeded and managed the matter of Religion with Fire and Sword; he made the flame so great, that his Religion and his Prince too hath both been almost quite turned out of the Country. *Pelli è medio sapientiam quoties vi res agitur*, said *Ennius*; and therefore the best of men, and the most glorious of Princes were always ready to give Toleration, but never to make executions for matters disputable: *Eusebius* in his second Book of the life of *Constantine* reports these words of the Emperour, *Parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant, pacis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant: Ipsa siquidem communicationis & societatis restitutio ad rectam etiam veritatis viam perducere potest. Nemo cuiquam molestus sit, quisque quod animo destinat hoc etiam faciat.*

And indeed there is great reason for Princes to give Toleration to disagreeing persons, whose opinions by fair means cannot be altered; for if the persons be confident they will serve God according to their persuasions; and if they be publickly prohibited they will privately convene, and the

all those inconveniences and mischiefs which
the arguments against the permission of
Conventicles, are Arguments for the pub-
lick permissions of differing Religions, be-
cause the denying of the publick worship
will certainly produce private Conventi-
cles, against which all wise Princes and
Common-wealths have upon great reasons
made Edicts and severe Sanctions, *Quic-*
quid enim agitur absente rege, in caput ejus
perunq̃ue redundat, say the Politicks: For
the face of a Man is as the face of a Lion,
and scatters all base machinations which
creath not but in the dark: It is a pro-
verbial saying, *quod nimia familiaritas ser-*
vorum est conspiratio adversus Dominum, and
they who for their security run into grots
and cellars, and retirements, think that
they being upon the defensive, those Prin-
ces and those Laws that drive them to it
are their Enemies, and therefore they can-
not be secure, unless the power of the one,
and the obligation of the other be lessened
and rescinded; and then the being restrain-
ed and made miserable, endears the discon-
tented persons mutually, and makes more
heartly and dangerous Confederations. King
James of blessed memory, in his Letters to
the States of the United Provinces, dated
March 1613. Thus wrote.... *Magis autem*
re fore si sopiantur autoritate publicâ, ita
prohibeatis Ministros vestros ne eas disputa-
tiones

tiones in suggestum aut ad plebem ferant, ac
districte imperetis ut pacem colant se invicem
Tolerando in ista opinionum ac sententiarum
discrepantiâ: Eoque justius videmur vo-
bis hoc ipsum suadere debere quod neu-
tram comperimus adeo deviam ut non possint &
cum fidei Christianæ veritate, & cum anima-
rum salute consistere, &c. The like Coun-
 cil in the divisions of Germany, at the first
 Reformation was thought reasonable by the
 Emperour *Ferdinand*, and his excellent Son
Maximilian; For they had observed that vi-
 olence did exasperate, was unblest, unsuc-
 cessful and unreasonable, and therefore they
 made Decrees of Toleration, and appointed
 tempers and expedients to be drawn up by
 discreet persons, and *George Cassander* was
 design'd to this great work, and did some-
 thing towards it: And *Emanuel Philibert*,
 D. of *Savoy* repenting of his war undertaken
 for Religion against the *Pedemontans*, pro-
 mised them Toleration, and was as good as
 his word: As much is done by the Nobility
 of *Polonia*. So that the best Princes and the
 best Bishops gave Toleration and Impu-
 nities; but it is known that the first Per-
 secutions of disagreeing persons were by the
Arrians, by the *Circumcellians* and *Donatists*,
 and from them, they of the Church took
 examples, who in small numbers did some-
 time persuade it, sometime practise it. And
 among the Greeks it became a publick and
 autho-

thoriz'd practice, till the Question of Images, grew hot and high; for then the Worshippers Images having taken their example from the Empress *Irene*, who put her Son's eyes out for making an Edict against Images, began to be as cruel as they were deceived, especially being encouraged by the Popes of *Rome*, who then blew the coals to some purpose.

And that I may upon this occasion give account of this affair in the Church of *Rome*, is remarkable that till the time of *Justinian* the Emperour, *A. D.* 525. the Catholics and *Novatians* had Churches indifferently permitted even in *Rome* it self, but the Bishops of *Rome* whose interest was much concerned in it, spoke much against it, and laboured the eradication of the *Novatians*, and at last when they got power into their hands they served them accordingly, but it is observed by *Socrates* that when the first Persecution was made against them at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent* I. at the same instant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became Lords of all, it being just in God to bring a persecution upon them for true belief, who with an incompetent Authority and insufficient grounds do persecute an error less material, in persons agreeing with them in the profession of the same common faith. And I have heard it observ'd as a blessing upon St. *Austin* (who was so merciful to erring persons as the great-

greatest part of his life in all senses, when he had twice chang'd his mind, to tolerate them, and never to endure them should be given over to the secular power to be kil'd) that the very night the *Manichaeans* set down before his City of *Hippodamia* besiege it, he dyed and went to God, being (as a reward of his merciful Doctrine) taken from the miseries to come, and yet that very thing was also a particular issue of the Divine Providence upon that City, who long before had altered their profession in truth by force, and now were falling in their power, who afterward by a great force turned them to be *Arrians*.

But in the Church of *Rome*, the *Popes* were the first Preachers of force and violence in matters of opinion, and that zealously, that *Pope Vigilius* suffered himself to be imprisoned and handled roughly by the Emperour *Justinian*, rather than he would consent to the restitution and peace of certain disagreeing persons, but as yet came not so far as death. The first that preached that Doctrine was *Dominick*, the Founder of the Begging Orders of Friars, the Friars Preachers; in memory of which the Inquisition is intrusted only to the Friars of his Order; and if there be any force in dreams, or truth in Legends (as there is not much in either) this very thing might be signified by his Mothers dream, who the

night

ight before *Dominick* was born, dream'd
 he was brought to bed of a huge Dog with
 fire-brand in his mouth: Sure enough,
 however his disciples expounded the dream,
 it was a better sign that he should prove a
 rabid, furious Incendiary, than any thing
 else; whatever he might be in the other
 parts of his life, in this Doctrine he was not
 much better, as appears in his deportment
 towards the *Albigenses*, against whom he so
 preached, *adeo quidem ut centum hæreticorum*
millia ab octo millibus Catholicorum fusa & in-
terfecta fuisse perhibeantur, saith one of him;
 and of those who were taken, 180 were
 burnt to death, because they would not ab-
 jure their Doctrine: This was the first exam-
 ple of putting erring persons to death, that
 I find in the Roman Church; For about 170
 years before *Berengarius* fell into opinion con-
 cerning the blessed Sacrament which they
 call'd Heresy, and recanted, and relapsed, and
 recanted again, and fell again two or three
 times, saith *Gerson* writing against *Romant* of
 the *Rose*, and yet he died *siccâ morte* his own
 natural death, and with hope of Heaven, and
 yet *Hildebrand* was once his judge, which
 shews that at that time *Rome* was not come to
 so great heighths of bloodshed. In *England*,
 although the Pope had as great power here
 as anywhere, yet there were no Executions
 for matter of opinion known till the time of
Henry the Fourth, who (because he Usurp'd
 the

B. Bruno
 Berengari-
 anos è suâ
 diocesi ex-
 pulit, non
 morti aut
 suppliciis
 corporali-
 bus tradi-
 dit.

the Crown) was willing by all means to en-
dear the Clergy by destroying their En-
mies, that so he might be sure of them
all his purposes. And indeed, it may be
come them well enough, who are wiser
their generations than the children of light
it may possibly serve the policies of evil per-
sons, but never the pure and chaste design
of Christianity, which admits no blood but
Christs, and the imitating blood of Martyrs
but knows nothing how to serve her end
by persecuting any of her erring children.

By this time I hope it will not be thought
reasonable to say, he that teaches mercy to
erring persons, teaches indifferency in Reli-
gion, unless so many Fathers, and so many
Churches, and the best of Emperours, and
all the World (till they were abused by Ty-
ranny, Popery, and Faction) did teach in-
differency, for I have shewn that Christiani-
ty does not punish corporally, persons er-
ring spiritually, but indeed Popery does.
The *Donatists* and the *Circumcellians*, and
Arrians, and the *Itaciani*, they of old did.
In the middle Ages, the Patrons of Images
did and the Papists at this day do, and have
done ever since they were taught it by
their *St. Dominick*.

Seventhly, And yet after all this, I have
something more to exempt my self from the
clamour of this Objection: For let all errors
be as much and as zealously suppress'd as may
be,

be, (the Doctrine of the following Discourse contradicts not that) but let it be done by such means as are proper instruments of their suppression, by Preaching and Disputation (so that neither of them breed disturbance) by charity and sweetness, by holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer.

For these ways are most natural, most prudent, most peaceable, and effectual. Only let not men be hasty in calling every dislik'd opinion by the name of Heresy, and when they have resolved, that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and persuasions.

And now if men will still say, I persuade to indifferency, there is no help for me, for I have given reasons against it, I must bear it as well as I can, I am not yet without remedy as they are, for patience will help me, and reason will not cure them, let them take their course, and I'll take mine:

Only I will take leave to consider this (and they would do well to do so too) that unless Faith be kept within its own latitude, and not called out to patrocinate every less necessary opinion, and the interest of every Sect, or peevish person; and if damnation be pronounced against Christians believing the Creed, and living good lives, because
b they

they are deceived, or are said to be deceived in some opinions less necessary, there is no way in the world to satisfy unlearned persons in the choice of their Religion, or to appease the inquietness of a scrupulous conscience: For suppose an honest Citizen whose employment and parts will not enable him to judge the disputes and arguings of great Clerks, sees factions commenc'd and manag'd with much bitterness by persons who might on either hand be fit enough to guide him; when if he follows either, he is disquieted and pronounced damned by the other (who also if he be the most unreasonable in his opinion will perhaps be more furious in his sentence) what shall this man do, where shall he rest the sole of his foot? Upon the Doctrine of the Church where he lives? Well but that he hears declaimed against perpetually, and other Churches claim highly and pretend fairly for truth, and condemn his Church: If I tell him that he must live a good life, and believe the Creed, and not trouble himself with their disputes, or interesting himself in Sects and Factions, I speak reason: Because no law of God ties him to believe more than what is of essential necessity, and whatsoever he shall come to know to be revealed by God: Now if he believe his Creed he believes all that is necessary to all, or of it self, and if he do his moral endeavour beside, he can do no more toward

find

finding out all the rest, and then he is secured; but then if this will secure him, why do men press further and pretend every opinion as necessary, and that in so high degree that if they all said true, or any two indeed of them, in 500 Sects which are in the world (and for ought I know there may be 5000) it is 500 to one but that every man is damned, for every Sect damns all but it self, and that is damn'd of 499, and it is excellent fortune then if that escape; and there is the same reason in every one of them, that is, it is extream unreasonableness in all of them to pronounce damnation against such persons against whom clearly and dogmatically holy Scripture hath not; *In odiosis quod minimum est sequimur, in favoribus quod est maximum,* saith the Law, and therefore we should say any thing, or make any excuse that is in any degree reasonable, rather than condemn all the world to Hell, especially if we consider these two things, that we our selves are as apt to be deceived as any are, and that they who are deceived, when they used their moral industry that they might not be deceived, if they perish for this, they perish for what they could not help.

But however, if the best security in the world be not in neglecting all sects, and subdivisions of men, and fixing our selves on points necessary and plain, and on honest and pious endeavours, according to our several capaci-

ties and opportunities for all the rest, if I say all this be not through the mercies of God, the best security to all unlearned persons, and learned too, where shall we fix, where shall we either have peace or security? If you bid me follow your Doctrine, you must tell me why, and perhaps when you have I am not able to judge, or if I be as able as other people are, yet when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and so may you or any man else you bid me follow, so that I am no whit the nearer truth or peace.

And then if we look abroad, and consider how there is scarce any Church, but is highly charg'd by many Adversaries in many things, possibly we may see a reason to charge every one of them in some things. And what shall we do then? The Church of *Rome* hath spots enough, and all the world is inquisitive enough to find out more, and to represent these to her greatest disadvantage. The Greek Church denies the procession of the holy Ghost from the Son; If that be false Doctrine, she is highly to blame, if it be not, then all the Western Churches are to blame for saying the contrary: And there is no Church that is in prosperity but alters her Doctrine every Age, either by bringing in new Doctrines, or by contradicting her old, which shews that none are satisfied with themselves, or with their own confessions: And since all Churches

believe

believe themselves fallible, that only excepted which all other Churches say is most of all deceived, it were strange if in so many Articles which make up their several bodies of Confessions, they had not mistaken every one of them in something or other: The *Lutheran* Churches maintain Consubstantiation, the *Zuinglians* are Sacramentaries, the *Calvinists* are fierce in the matters of absolute Predetermination, and all these reject Episcopacy, which the Primitive Church would have made no doubt to have called Heresy: The *Socinians* profess a portentous number of strange opinions; they deny the holy Trinity, and the satisfaction of our blessed Saviour: The *Anabaptists* laugh at Pædo-baptism; The *Ethiopian* Churches are *Nestorian*: where then shall we fix our confidence, or joyn Communion? to pitch upon any one of these is to throw the dice, if salvation be to be had only in one of them, and that every error that by chance hath made a Sect, and is distinguished by a name, be damnable.

If this consideration does not deceive me, we have no other help in the midst of these distractions, and dis-unions, but all of us to be united in that common term, which as it does constitute the Church in its being such, so it is the medium of the Communion of Saints, and that is the Creed of the Apostles, and in all other things an honest en-

* Clem. Alex. Stromat. i. ait
Philosophiam liberam esse præ-
stantissimam, quæ scil. versatur
in perspicaciter seligendis dog-
matis omnium Sectarum. Pola-
mo Alexandrinus sic primus phi-
losophatus est, ut ait Laërtius
in Proœmio, unde cognomina-
tus est, ἐκλεξάμενος, scil. τὸ
ἀρίστον ἐξ ἑκάστης τῆς αἰρέσεως.

deavour to find out * what
truths we can, and a chari-
table and mutual permisi-
on to others that disagree
from us and our opinions.
I am sure this may satisfie
us, for it will secure us, but
I know not any thing else
that will, and no man can

be reasonably persuaded, or satisfied in any
thing else, unless he throws himself upon
chance, or absolute predestination, or his
own confidence, in every one of which it
is two to one at least but he may miscarry.

Thus far I thought I had reason on my
side, and I suppose I have made it good up-
on its proper grounds, in the pages follow-
ing. But then if the result be, that men
must be permitted in their opinions, and
that Christians must not Persecute Christi-
ans; I have also as much reason to reprove
all those oblique Arts which are not direct
Persecutions of mens persons, but they are
indirect proceedings, ungentle and unchri-
stian, servants of faction and interest, pro-
vocations to zeal and animosities, and de-
structive of learning and ingenuity. And
these are suppressing all the monuments of
their Adversaries, forcing them to recant,
and burning their Books.

For it is a strange industry, and an impor-
tune diligence that was used by our forefa-
thers;

fathers; of all those Heresies which gave them battle and imployment, we have absolutely no Record or Monument, but what themselves who were Adversaries have transmitted to us, and we know that Adversaries, especially such who observ'd all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of the Enemy, are not always the best records or witnesses of such transactions. We see it now in this very Age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good Registers of the actions of the adverse side: And if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now, now I say that it is possible for any man, and likely that the interested adversary will discover the imposture, it is far more unlikely, that after Ages should know any other truth, but such as serves the ends of the representers. I am sure such things were never taught us by Christ and his Apostles, and if we were sure that our selves spoke truth, or that truth were able to justifie her self, it were better if to preserve a Doctrine we did not destroy a Commandment, and out of zeal pretending to Christian Religion, lose the glories and rewards of ingenuity and Christian simplicity.

Of the same consideration is mending of Authors, not to their own mind but to ours, that is, to mend them so as to spoil them; forbidding the publication of Books, in which there is nothing impious, or a-

gainst the publick interest, leaving out clauses in Translations, disgracing mens persons, charging disavowed Doctrines upon men, and the persons of the men with the consequences of their Doctrine, which they deny either to be true or to be consequent, false reporting of Disputations and Conferences, burning Books by the hand of the hang-man, and all such Arts, which shew that we either distrust God for the maintenance of his truth, or that we distrust the cause, or distrust our selves and our abilities: I will say no more of these, but only concerning the last, I shall transcribe a passage out of *Tacitus* in the life of *Julius Agricola*, who gives this account of it, *Veniam non petissem nisi incur-saturus tam sæva & infesta virtutibus tempora. Legimus cum Aruleno Rustico Pætus Thraseas Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo aucthores, sed in libros quoque eorum sævitum de legato Triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac forerentur, scil. illo igne vocem populi Rom. & libertatem Senatus & conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientiæ professoribus, atque omni bonâ arte in exilium actâ, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret.* It is but an illiterate Policy to think that such indirect and uningenuous proceedings can amongst wise and free-men disgrace the Authors, and disrepute their

Discourses; And I have seen that the price hath been trebled upon a forbidden or a condemn'd Book, and some men in policy have got a prohibition that their impression might be the more certainly vendible, and the Author himself thought considerable.

The best way is to leave tricks and devices, and to fall upon that way which the best Ages of the Church did use: With the strength of Argument, and Allegations of Scripture, and modesty of deportment, and meekness, and charity to the persons of men, they converted misbelievers, stopped the mouths of Adversaries, asserted truth, and discountenanced error; and those other stratagems and Arts of support and maintenance to Doctrines, were the issues of heretical brains; the old Catholicks had nothing to secure themselves but the ἐν μέγα of truth and plain dealing.

Fidem minutis dissecant ambagibus

Ut quisque linguâ est nequior.

Solvunt ligantque quæstionum vincula

Per syllogismos plectiles.

Væ captiosis Sycophantarum strophis,

Væ versipelli astutiæ.

Nodos tenaces recta rumpit regula

Infesta discertantibus:

Idcirco mundi stulta deligit Deus

Ut concidant Sophistica.

Prudent.
apothecof.
hym. infi-
del.

And to my understanding, it is a plain Art and design of the Devil, to make us so in

in love with our own opinions, as to them Faith and Religion, that we may be proud in our understanding; and besides that by our zeal in our opinions, we grow cool in our piety and practical duties, also by this earnest contention does directly destroy good life, by engagement of Zealots to do any thing rather than be overcome, and lose their beloved proposition. But I would fain know why is not any vicious habit as bad or worse than a false opinion? Why are we so zealous against those we call Hereticks, and yet great friends with drunkards, and fornicators, and swearers and intemperate and idle persons? Is it because we are commanded by the Apostle to reject a Heretick after two admonitions, and not to bid such a one God speed? It is no good reason why we should be zealous against such persons, provided we mistake them not. For those of whom these Apostles speak, are such as deny Christ to come in the flesh, such as deny an Article of Creed; and in such odious things, it is not safe nor charitable to extend the grave men and punishment beyond the instance that the Apostles make, or their exact parallel. But then also, it would be remembered that the Apostles speak as fiercely against communion with fornicators, and all disorders, practical, as against communion with Hereticks, *If any man that is called a brother*

Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a
 Tailor, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner,
 with such a one no not to eat: I am certain that
 Drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives
 contrary to the Laws of Christianity, as
 Heretick; and I am also sure that I know
 what drunkenness is, but I am not sure that
 such an opinion is Heresy, neither would
 other men be so sure as they think for if they
 did consider it aright, and observe the infi-
 nite deceptions, and causes of deceptions in
 wise men, and in most things, and in all
 doubtful Questions, and that they did not
 mistake confidence for certainty.

But indeed, I could not but smile at those
 silly Fryers, two *Franciscans* offered them-
 selves to the fire to prove *Savonarola* to be a
 Heretick, but a certain *Jacobine* offered
 himself to the fire to prove that *Savonarola*
 had true Revelations, and was no Heretick;
 At the mean time *Savonarola* preacht, but
 made no such confident offer, nor durst he
 venture at that new kind of fire Ordeal;
 and put case all four had past through the
 grave, and dyed in the flames, what would
 that have proved? Had he been a Heretick
 no Heretick, the more or the less, for the
 confidence of these Zealous Ideots? If we
 mark it, a great many Arguments whereon
 many Sects rely, are no better probation
 than this comes to. Confidence is the first,
 and the second, and the third part of a very
 great

Comm. u.
 l. 8. c. 19.

great many of their propositions.

But now if men would a little turn their Tables, and be as zealous for a good life, and all the strictest precepts of Christianity (which is a Religion the most holy, the most reasonable, and the most consummate that ever was taught to man) as they are for such propositions in which neither the life nor the ornament of Christianity is concerned, we should find, that as a consequence of this piety, men would be as careful as they could, to find out all truths, and the sense of all revelations which may concern their duty; and where men were miserable and could not, yet others that liv'd good lives too would also be so charitable, as not to add affliction to this misery; and both these are parts of good life, to be compassionate, and to help to bear one another's burdens, not to destroy the weak, but to entertain him meekly, that's a precept of charity, and to endeavour to find out the whole will of God, that also is a part of the obedience, the choice and the excellency of Faith, and he lives not a good life, that does not do both these.

But men think they have more reason to be zealous against Heresy than against a vicious life in manners, because Heresy is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil. Indeed if by a Heresy we mean that which is against an Article of Creed, and breaks pe-

of the Covenant made between God and man by the mediation of Jesus Christ, I grant to be a very grievous crime, a calling Gods veracity into question, and a destruction also of good life, because upon the Articles of Creed, obedience is built, and it lives or dies, as the effect does by its proper cause; for Faith is the moral cause of obedience: But then Heresy, that is, such as this, is also a vice, and the person criminal, and the sin is to be esteem'd in its degrees of malignity, and let men be as zealous against it as they can, and imploy the whole arsenal of the spiritual armour against it, such as this, is worse than adultery or murder, in as much as the soul is more noble than the body, and a false doctrine is of greater dissemination and extent than a single act of violence or impurity. Adultery or murder is a duel, but Heresy (truly and indeed such) is an unlawful war, it slays thousands: The losing of Faith is like digging down a foundation; all the superstructures of hope, and patience, and charity fall with it: And besides this, Heresy of all crimes is the most inexcusable and of least temptation; for true faith is most commonly kept with the least trouble of any grace in the world; and Heresy of it self hath not only no pleasure in it, but is a very punishment; because faith as it opposes heretical or false opinions, and distinguishes from charity, consists

sists in meer acts of believing, which because they are of true propositions, are naturally proportionable to the understanding, and are more honourable than false. But then concerning those things which men now commonly call Heresy, they cannot be so formidable as they are represented, and if we consider that drunkenness is certainly a Damnable sin, and that there are more Drunkards than Hereticks, and that drunkenness is parent of a thousand vices, it may better be said of this vice than of most of those opinions which are called Heresies, it is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evil, and therefore as fit an object for a pious zeal to contest against, as is any of those opinions which trouble mens ease or reputation, for that is the greatest of their malignity.

But if we consider that Sects are made, and opinions are called Heresies upon interest, and the grounds of emolument, we shall find that a good life would cure much of this mischief. For first, the Church of *Rome* which is the great dictatrix of dogmatical resolutions, and the declarer of Heresy, and calls Heretick more than all the world besides, has made that the rule of Heresy, which is the conservatory of interest, and the ends of men. For to recede from the Doctrine of the Church, with them makes Heresy, that is, to disrepute their Authority and not to obey them, not to be their subjects, not to give

them the Empire of our conscience, is the
great *κρίσιον* of Heresy.

So that with them, Heresy is to be esteem-
ed clearly by humane ends, not by Divine
rules; that is formal Heresy which does ma-
terially disserve them, and it would make a
suspicious man a little inquisitive into their
particular Doctrines, and when he finds that
Indulgences, and Jubilees, and Purgatories,
and Masses, and Offices for the dead, are
very profitable; that the Doctrine of prima-
ry, of infallibility, of superiority over Coun-
cils, of indirect power in temporals, are great
instruments of secular honour; would be apt
enough to think that if the Church of *Rome*
would learn to lay her honour at the feet of
the Crucifix, and despise the world, and pre-
fer *Jerusalem* before *Rome*, and Heaven above
the Lateran, that these opinions would not
have in them any native strength to support
them, against the perpetual assaults of their
adversaries, that speak so much reason and
scripture against them. I have instanced in
the Roman Religion, but I wish it may be
considered also how far mens Doctrines in
other Sects serve mens temporal ends, so far
that it would not be unreasonable or unne-
cessary to attempt to cure some of their di-
temperatures or mispersuasions by the salu-
ary precepts of sanctity and holy life: Sure
enough, if it did not more concern their re-
putation and their lasting interest to be
counted

counted true believers rather than good
vers, they would rather endeavour to live
well, than to be accounted of a right opinion
on in things beside the Creed.

For my own particular I cannot but expect; that God in his Justice should enlarge the bounds of the Turkish Empire, or for any other way punish Christians by reason of their pertinacious disputing about things unnecessary, undeterminable, and unprofitable; and for their hating and persecuting their brethren which should be as dear to them as their own lives, for not consenting to one another's follies, and senseless vanities: How many volumes have been writ about Angels, about immaculate conception, about original sin, when that all that is solid reason or clear Revelation, in all these three Articles, may be reasonably enough comprized in four lines! And in these trifles and impertinencies men are curiously busie while they neglect those glorious precepts of Christianity and holy life, which are the glories of our Religion, and would enable us to a happy eternity.

My Lord, thus far my thoughts have carried me, and then I thought I had reason to go further, and to examine the proper grounds upon which these persuasions might rely and stand firm, in case any body should contest against them: For possibly men may be angry at me and my design; for I do not think them great displeasure, who think no end

then well served, when their interest is dis-
served; and but that I have writ so unto-
wardly and heavily, that I am not worth a
confutation, possibly some or other might
be writing against me. But then I must tell
them I am prepared of an answer before hand:
For I think I have spoken reason in my Book,
and examined it with all the severity I have,
and if after all this I be deceived, this con-
firms me in my first opinion, and becomes a
new Argument to me, that I have spoken rea-
son; for it furnishes me with a new instance,
that it is necessary, there should be a mutu-
al compliyanee and Toleration, because even
then when a man thinks he hath most reason
to be confident, he may easily be deceived.

For I am sure, I have no other design but
the prosecution and advantage of truth, and
I may truly use the words of Gregory Nazian-
zen, *Non studemus paci in detrimentum veræ
doctrinæ, . . . ut facilitatis & mansuetudinis fa-
mam colligamus*: But I have writ this because
I thought it was necessary and seasonable,
and charitable and agreeable to the great pre-
cepts and design of Christianity, consonant
to the practice of the Apostles, and of the best
Ages of the Church, most agreeable to Scri-
pture and reason, to revelation and the nature
of the thing; and it is such a Doctrine, that if
there be variety in humane affairs, if the e-
vent of things be not settled in a durable con-
sistence, but is changeable, every one of us all
may have need of it: I shall only therefore de-

fire that they who will read it may come to the reading of it with as much simplicity of purposes and unmix'd desires of truth, as I did to the writing it, and that no man trouble himself with me or my discourse, that think before hand that his opinion cannot be reasonably altered. If he thinks me to be mistaken before he tries, let him also think that he may be mistaken too, and that he who judges before he hears, is mistaken though he gives a right sentence:

A i ioph.
in Pluto.

Ὁυ χελιάζειν ἢ βοᾶν πρὶν ἂν μάθῃς,

Was good counsel: But at a venture, I shall leave this sentence of *Solomon* to his consideration, *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, but a fool rageth and is confident.* Πάντα εἶδέναι οἶεσθαι ἢ διαγρυψέσθαι, is a trick of boys and bold young fellows, says *Aristotle*, but they who either know themselves, or things, or persons, περιδέασιν αἰετὸ τὸ ἴσως, καὶ τὸ τάχα. Peradventure yea, peradventure no, is very often the wisest determination of a Question: For there are μεγάλῃ ἢ ἀπειροὶ δυνάμεις (as the Apostle notes) foolish and unlearned Questions, and it were better to stop the current of such fopperies by silence than by disputing them convey them to posterity. And many things there are of more profit, which yet are of no more certainty, and therefore boldness of assertion (except it be in matters of Faith and clearest Revelation) is an argument of the vanity of the Man, never of the truth of the proposition; for to

2 Tim. 2.

such

uch matters the saying of *Xenophanes* in *Var-*
ro, is pertinent and applicable, *Hominus est hæc*
opinari, Dei scire; God alone knows them and
 we conjecture.

Μάρτυς ἄπας ὁ θεὸς εἰρηγῆς καλῶς.

And altho' I be as desirous to know what
 I should, and what I should not, as any of my
 Brethren the Sons of *Adam*; yet I find that
 the more I search, the further I am from be-
 ing satisfied, and make but few discoveries,
 Ave of my own ignorance, and therefore I
 am desirous to follow the example of a very
 wise Personage, *Julius Agricola*, of whom *Ta-*
ritus gave this testimony, *Retinuitque (quod*
est difficillimum) ex scientiâ modum; or that I
 may take my precedent from within the pale
 of the Church, it was the saying of *S. Austin*,
Mallem quidem eorum quæ à me quæstivisti habere
scientiam quam ignorantiam, sed quia id non
potui, magis eligo causam ignorantiam con-
fiteri, quam falsam scientiam profiteri; And
 these words do very much express my sense.
 But if there be any man so confident as *Luther*,
 sometimes was, who said that he could ex-
 pound all Scripture, or so vain as *Eckius* who
 in his *Chrysopassus* ventur'd upon the highest
 and most mysterious Question of Predestina-
 tion, *ut in eâ juveniles possit calores exercere*;
 such persons as these, or any that is furious in
 his opinion, will scorn me and my Discourse;
 but I shall not be much moved at it, only I
 shall wish that I had as much knowledge as
 they think me to want, and they as much

as they believe themselves to have. In the meantime, Modesty were better for us both and indeed for all men: For when men indeed are knowing amongst other things they are able to separate certainties from uncertainties; If they be not knowing, it is pity that their ignorance should be triumphant, or discompose the publick peace, or private confidence.

And now (my Lord) that I have inscrib'd this Book to your Lordship, altho' it be a designe doing honour to my self, that I have markt it with so honour'd and belov'd a Name, might possibly need as much excuse as it does pardon, but your Lordship knows your own; for out of your Mines I have digg'd the Mineral; only I have stamp't it with my own Image, as you may perceive by the deformities which are in it. But your great Name in Letters will add so much value to it, as to make it obtain its pardon amongst them that know how to value you, and all your relatives and dependants by the proportion of relation. For others I shall be incurious, because the number of them that honour you is the same with them that honour Learning and Piety, and they are the best theatre and the best judges; amongst which the world must needs take notice of my ambition, to be ascribed by my public pretence to be what I am in all heartiness of Devotion, and for all the reason of the world,

10 OCT 61
My Honour'd Lord,

Your Lordship's most faithfull

and most affectionate Servant,

JER. TAYLOR

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Θεολογία Ἐκκλησιαστική.

OF THE
LIBERTY
OF
PROPHESYING.

THE infinite variety of Opinions in matters of Religion, as they have troubled Christendom, with interests, factions, and partialities; so have they caused great divisions of the heart, and variety of thoughts and designs amongst serious and prudent men. For they all seeing the inconveniencies which the dis-union of Perswasions and Opinions have produced directly or accidentally, have thought themselves obliged to stop this inundation of mischiefs, and have made attempts accordingly. But it hath happened to most of them as to a mistaken Physician, who gives excellent Physick but misapplies it, and so misses of his cure; so have these men, their attempts have therefore been ineffectual; for they put their help to a wrong part, or they have endeavoured to cure the symptoms, and have let the disease alone till it seem'd incurable. Some have endeavoured to unite these factions by propounding such a Guide which they were all bound to follow;

B

hoping

hoping that the unity of a Guide, would have perſwade unity of minds; but who this Guide ſhould be at laſt became ſuch a queſtion, that it was made part of the fire that was to be quenched ſo far was it from extinguishing any part of the flame. Others thought of a Rule, and this might be the means of union, or nothing could do. But ſuppoſing all the World had been agreed to this Rule, yet the interpretation of it was ſo full of variety, that this alſo became part of the diſeaſe, for which the cure was pretended. Men reſolv'd upon this, that though they had not hit upon the right, yet ſome way might be thought upon to reconcile differences in Opinion, thinking ſo long as this variety ſhould laſt, Chriſt's Kingdom was not advanced, and the work of the Goſpel went on but ſlowly: For men in the mean time conſidered, that ſo long as men had ſuch variety of principles, ſuch ſeveral conſtitutions, educations, tempers, and ſtampers, hopes, intereſts, and weakneſſes, degrees of light, and degrees of underſtanding, was impoſſible all ſhould be of one mind. And what is impoſſible to be done, is not neceſſary ſhould be done: And therefore although variety of Opinions was impoſſible to be cured, yet they who attempted it, did like him who ſet his ſhoulder to the ground to ſtop an Earthquake) yet the inconveniences ariſing from this might poſſibly be cured, not by uniting their ſentiments, that was to be deſpair'd of, but by curing that which cauſed theſe miſchiefs, and accidental inconveniences of their diſagreeings. For though theſe inconveniencies which every man ſees and feels were conſequent to this diversity of perſwaſions, yet it was but accidentally

by chance, inasmuch as we see that in many things, and they of great concernment, men allow to themselves and to each other a liberty of disagreeing; and no hurt neither. And certainly if diversity of Opinions were of it self the cause of mischiefs it would be so ever, that is, regularly and universally, (but that we see it is not :) For there are disputes in Christendom concerning matters of greater concernment than most of those Opinions that distinguish Sects, and make factions; and yet because men are permitted to differ in those great matters, such evils are not consequent to such differences, as are to the uncharitable managing of smaller and more inconsiderable Questions. It is of greater consequence to believe right in the Question of the validity or invalidity of a death-bed repentance, than to believe aright in the Question of Purgatory; and the consequences of the Doctrine of Predetermination, are of deeper and more material consideration than the products of the belief of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of private Masses; and yet these great concerns where a liberty of Prophecyng in these Questions have been permitted, hath made no distinct Communion, no sects of Christians, and the others have, and so have these too in those places where they have peremptorily been determined on either side. Since then if men are quiet and charitable in some disagreeings, that then and there the inconvenience ceases, if they were so in all others where lawfully they might (and they may in most,) Christendom should be no longer rent in pieces, but would be reintegrated in a new Pentecost, and although the Spirit of God did rest upon us in divided tongues,

yet ſo long as thoſe tongues were of fire not to kindle ſtrife, but to warm our affections, and inflame our charities, we ſhould find that this variety of Opinions in ſeveral perſons would be look'd upon as an argument only of diverſity of operations, while the Spirit is the ſame; and that another man believes not ſo well as I, is only an argument that I have a better and a clearer illumination than he, that I have a better gift than he, received a ſpecial grace and favour, and excel him in this, and am perhaps excelled by him in many more. And if we all impartially endeavour to find a truth, ſince this endeavour and ſearch only is in our power, that we ſhall find it being *ab extra*, a gift and an aſſiſtance extrinſecal, I can ſee no reaſon why this pious endeavour to find out truth ſhall not be of more force to unite us in the bonds of charity, than his miſery in miſſing it ſhall be to diſ-unite us. So that ſince a union of perſuaſion is impoſſible to be attained if we would attempt the cure by ſuch remedies as are apt to enkindle and encreaſe Charity, I am confident we might ſee a bleſſed peace would be the reward and crown of ſuch endeavours.

But men are now adays and indeed always have been, ſince the expiration of the firſt bleſſed Ages of Chriſtianity, ſo in love with their own fancies and Opinions, as to think Faith and all Chriſtendom is concerned in their ſupport and maintainance, and whoever is not ſo fond and does not dandle them like themſelves, grows up to a quarrel, which becauſe it is in *matéria theologica* is made a quarrel in Religion, and God is entitled to it; and then if you are once thought an enemy to God it is our duty

to persecute you even to death, we do God good service in it; when, if we should examine the matter rightly, the Question is either in *materia non revelata*, or *minus evidenti*, or *non necessaria*, either it is not revealed, or not so clearly, but that wise and honest men may be of different minds, or else it is not of the foundation of faith, but a remote super-structure, or else of meer speculation, or perhaps when all comes to all, it is a false Opinion, or a matter of humane interest, that we have so zealously contended for; for to one of these heads most of the Disputes of Christendom may be reduc'd; so that I believe the present factions (or the most) are from the same cause which St. Paul observed in the *Corinthian Schism*, when there are divisions among you, are ye not carnal? It is not the differing Opinions that is the cause of the present ruptures, but want of Charity; it is not the variety of understandings, but the disunion of wills and affections; it is not the several principles, but the several ends that cause our miseries: our Opinions commence and are upheld according as our turns are serv'd and our interests are preserved, and there is no cure for us, but Piety and Charity. A holy life will make our belief holy, if we consult not humanity and its imperfections in the choice of our Religion, but search for truth without designs, save only of acquiring heaven, and then be as careful to preserve Charity, as we were to get a point of Faith; I am much perswaded we should find out more truths by this means; or however (which is the main of all) we shall be secured tho' we miss them; and then we are well enough.

For if it be evinced that one heaven shall hold men of several Opinions, if the unity of Faith

**Optat. lib. 3.*

be not deſtroyed by that which men call differing Religions, and if an unity of Charity be the duty of us all even towards perſons that are not perſwaded of every propoſition we believe then I would fain know to what purpoſe are all thoſe ſtirs, and great noiſes in Chriſtendom thoſe names of faction, the ſeveral Names of Churches not diſtinguiſhed by the diviſion of Kingdoms, *ut Eccleſia ſequatur Imperium*, which was the Primitive *Rule and Canon, but diſtinguiſhed by Names of Sects and Men; theſe all become inſtruments of hatred, thence come Schiſms and parting of Communion, and then perſecutions, and then wars and rebellion, and then the diſſolutions of all Friendſhips and Societies. All theſe miſchiefs proceed not from this, that all men are not of one mind, for that is neither neceſſary nor poſſible, but that every Opinion is made an Article of Faith, every Article is a ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes faction, every faction is zealous, and all pretends for God, and whatſoever is for God cannot be too much; we by this time are come to that paſs, we think we love not God except we hate our Brother, and we have not the virtue of Religion, unleſs we perſecute all Religions but our own; for luke-warmneſs is ſo odious to God and Man, that we proceeding furiously upon theſe miſtakes, by ſuppoſing we preſerve the body, we deſtroy the ſoul of Religion, and by being zealous for faith, or which is all one for that which we miſtake for faith, we are cold in charity; and ſo looſe the reward of both.

All theſe errors and miſchiefs muſt be diſcovered and cured, and that's the purpoſe of this Diſcourſe.

S E C T

S E C T. I.

Of the nature of Faith, and that its duty is compleated in believing the Articles of the Apostles Creed.

First then it is of great concernment to know *Number 1.*
the nature and integrity of faith: For there begins our first and great mistake; for Faith although it be of great excellency, yet when it is taken for a habit intellectual, it hath so little room and so narrow a capacity, that it cannot lodge thousands of those Opinions which pretend to be of her Family.

For although it be necessary for us to believe *Numb. 2.*
whatsoever we know to be revealed of God, and so every man does, that believes there is a God: yet it is not necessary, concerning many things, to know that God hath revealed them, that is, we may be ignorant of, or doubt concerning the propositions, and indifferently maintain either part, when the Question is not concerning Gods veracity, but whether God hath said so or no: That which is of the foundation of Faith, that only is necessary; and the knowing or not knowing of that, the believing or dis-believing it, is that only which in *genere credendorum*, is in immediate and necessary order to salvation or damnation.

Now all the reason and demonstration of the *Numb. 3.*
world convinces us, that this foundation of Faith, or the great adequate object of the Faith that saves us, is that great mysteriousness of Christianity which Christ taught with so much

gence, for the credibility of which he wrought so many miracles; for the testimony of which the Apostles endured persecutions; that which was a folly to the Gentiles, and a scandal to the Jews, this is that which is the object of a Christians Faith; All other things are implicitly in the belief of the Articles of Gods veracity, and are not necessary in respect of the constitution of faith to be drawn out, but may there lie in the bowels of the great Articles without danger to any thing or any person, unless some other accident or circumstance makes them necessary. Now the great object which I speak of, is *Jesum Christ crucified*; *Constitui enim apud vos nihil scire prater Jesum Christum & hunc crucifixum*; said St. Paul to the Church of Corinth: This is the Article upon the Confession of which Christ built his Church, viz. only upon St. Peters Creed which was no more but this simple enunciation, *We believe, and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God*: And to this salvation particularly is promised, as in the case of *Martha's* Creed, *John 11. 27*. To this the Scripture gives the greatest Testimony, and to all them that confess it; *For every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And whoever confesseth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*: The believing this Article is the end of writing the four Gospels: *For all these things are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*, and then that this is sufficient follows, and that believing, viz. this Article (for this was only intanced in) *ye might have life through his name*: This is that great Article which in genere credendorum, is sufficient disposition to prepare a

Mat. 16. 19.

1 Joh. 4. 2, 15.

Joh. 20. 31.

roughly catechumen to Baptiſm, as appears in the caſe of
the *Ethiopian* Eunuch, whoſe Creed was only
this, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*,
and upon this Confeſſion (ſaith the ſtory) they
both went into the water, and the *Ethiop* was
waſhed and became as white as Snow.

In theſe particular inſtances, there is no variety of Articles, ſave only that in the annexes
of the ſeveral expreſſions, ſuch things are ex-
preſſed, as beſides that Chriſt is come, they tell
from whence and to what purpoſe: And what-
ever is expreſſed, or is to theſe purpoſes im-
plied, is made articulate and explicate, in the
ſhort and admirable myſterious Creed of St.
Paul, Rom. 10. 8. *This is the word of faith which*
we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth
the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart,
that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou
ſhalt be ſaved: This is the great and intire com-
plexion of a Chriſtians faith, and ſince ſalvation
is promiſed to the belief of this Creed, either
a ſnare is laid for us, with a purpoſe to deceive
us, or elſe nothing is of prime and original ne-
ceſſity to be believed, but this, *Jeſus Chriſt our*
Redeemer; and all that which is the neceſſary
parts, means, or main actions of working this
redemption for us, and the honour for him is
in the bowels and fold of the great Article, and
claims an explicate belief by the ſame reaſon
that binds us to the belief of its firſt complexion,
without which neither the thing could be acted,
nor the propoſition underſtood.

For the act of believing propoſitions, is not
for it ſelf, but in order to certain ends; as
Sermons are to good life and obedience; for
(excepting that it acknowledges Gods vera-
city

city, and so is a direct act of Religion) believing a revealed proposition, hath no excellence in it self, but in order to that end for which we are instructed in such revelations. Now the great purpose being to bring us to him by Jesus Christ, Christ is our medium to God, obedience is the medium to Christ, and Faith the medium to obedience, and therefore is to have estimate in proportion to its proper end, those things are necessary which necessarily promote the end, without which obedience cannot be encouraged or prudently enjoyn'd: that those Articles are necessary, that is, that they are fundamental points, upon which we have our obedience; and as the influence of the Article is to the persuasion or engagement of obedience, so they have their degrees of necessity. Now all that Christ when he preached, taught us to believe, and all that the Apostles in their Sermons propound, all aim at this, that we should acknowledge Christ for our Law-giver and our Saviour; so that nothing can be necessary by a prime necessity to be believed exactly, but such things which are the parts of the great Article, because they encourage our services or oblige them, such as declare Christs greatness in himself, or his goodness to us: So that although we must neither deny nor doubt of any thing, which we know our great Master hath taught us: yet the observation is in special and by name annexed to the belief of those Articles only, which are in them the indearments of our services, the support of our confidence, or the foundation of our hopes, such as are, Jesus Christ Son of the living God, the Crucifixion

believe the Resurrection of Jesus, forgiveness of sins by his blood, Resurrection of the dead, and life eternal; because these propositions qualifie Christ our Saviour and our Law-giver, the one to engage our services, the other to endear him; for so much is necessary as will make us be his Servants, and his Disciples; and what can be required more? This only. Salvation is promised to the explicate belief of those Articles, and therefore those only are necessary, and those are sufficient; but thus, to us in the formality of Christians, which is a formality never-added to a former capacity, we before we are Christians are reasonable creatures, and capable of a blessed eternity, and there is a Creed which is the Gentiles Creed, which is so proposed in the Christian Creed, as it is supposed in a Christian to be a man, and that is, *operans in mundum accedentem ad Deum credere Deum esse, & esse remuneratorem quarentinum eum.*

If any man will urge farther, that whatsoever is deducible from these articles by necessary consequence, is necessary to be believed explicate: I Answer; It is true, if he sees the reduction and coherence of the parts; but it is not certain that every man shall be able to deduce whatsoever is either immediately, or certainly deducible from these premises; and then since salvation is promised to the explicate belief of these; I see not how any man can justify the making the way to heaven narrower than Jesus Christ hath made it, it being already so narrow, that there are few that find it.

In the pursuance of this great truth, the Apostles or the holy men, their Contemporaries and Disciples composed a Creed to be a Rule of Faith

Numb. 6.

Numb. 7.

* *Apol. contr. Gern. c. 47. de veland.*

ving. c. 1.

† *In expoſit. Symbol.*

¶ *Serm. 5. de Tempore, c. 2.*

* *In Symbol. apud Cyprian.*

† *Omnes orthodoxi Patres affirmant Symbolum ab ipſis Apoſtolicis conſtitutum.*

Sext. Senenſis. l. 2. bibl.

videt Genebr.

l. 3. de Trin.

Faith to all Christians as appears in Irenæus, * Tertullian, † St. Cyprian, ‖ St. Austin, * Rufinus and divers † others; which Creed unless it contained all the intire object of Faith, and foundation of Religion, it cannot be imagined to what purpose it should serve; and that it so esteem'd by the whole Church of God in all Ages, appears in this, that since Faith is a necessary pre-disposition to Baptism in all people capable of the use of reason, all Catechumens the Latin Church coming to Baptism, were interrogated concerning their Faith, and gave satisfaction in the recitation of this Creed. In the East they professed exactly the same Faith, something differing in words, but of the same matter, reason, design, and consequence, and so they did at Hierusalem, so at Aquileia. This was that ὁρεθὴ καὶ αἰμάρων ὁ πίστεις, ἥν περ κληροῦν αἰρεῖα τῆ θεῆ καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ κατ' ἐξουσίαν καὶ καὶνισμὸν δεξαμένη. These Articles were αἰρίων ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶ μετ' ἐκείνων διαλεφάντων ἐν ταῖς αἰς θεῆ ἐκκλησίαις διδάγματα. L. 5. Cod. de Sr. T. & fid. Cath. Cum recta. Now since the Apostles and Apostolical men and Churches in their Symbols, did recite particular Articles to a considerable number, and were so minute in their recitation, as to descend to circumstances, it is more than probable that they omitted nothing of necessity; and that these Articles are not general principles, in the bosom of which many more Articles equally necessary be believed explicitly and more particularly are infolded; but that it is as minute an explication of those *prima credibilia* I before reckoned, as is necessary to salvation.

And therefore *Tertullian* calls the Creed re- Numb. 2.
am fidei, quâ salvâ & formâ ejus manente in
ordine, possit in Scriptura tractari & inquiri si
videtur vel ambiguitate pendere vel obscuritate
ambuari. Cordis signaculum & nostra militia Sa-
cramentum, St. Ambrose calls it *lib. 3. de velandis*
virgin. Comprehensio fidei nostræ atque perfectio,
St. Austin Serm. 115. Confessio, expositio, re-
velatio fidei, generally by the Ancients: The profes-
sion of this Creed, was the exposition of that say-
ing of St. Peter, οὐκ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀγαθὸν ἐπαρρησιάζεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ,
Answer of a good conscience towards God. For
the recitation and profession of this Creed,
Baptism, it is that Tertullian de resur. carnis
cap. 1. Anima non lotionem, sed responsione sancitur.
And of this was the Prayer of Hilary, lib. 12.
Trinit. Conserva hanc conscientia mea vocem
quod in regenerationis meæ Symbolo Baptizatus
Patre, Filio, Spir. S. professus sum semper obtineam.
 And according to the Rule and Reason of this
 Discourse (that it may appear that the Creed hath
 in it all Articles *primò & per se*, primely and u-
 niversally necessary) the Creed is just such an
 Application of that Faith which the Apostles
 preached, *viz.* the Creed which *St. Paul* recites,
 contains in it all those things which entitle
 Christ to us in the capacities of our Law-giver
 and our Saviour, such as enable him to the great
 work of redemption according to the predi-
 cations concerning him, and such as engage and
 encourage our services. For, taking out the
 Article of Christs descent into Hell (which was
 not in the old Creed, as appears in some of the
 Copies I before referr'd to, in *Tertullian, Ruffinus,*
 and *Irenæus*; and indeed was omitted in all the
 Confessions of the Eastern Churches, in the
 Church

Church of *Rome*, and in the *Nicene Creed*, by adoption came to be the Creed of the *Catholic Church*) all other Articles are ſuch as diſtinctly conſtitute the parts and work of our redemption, ſuch as clearly derive the honour to Chriſt, and enable him with the capacities of our Saviour and Lord. The reſt engage our ſervices by propoſition of ſuch Articles which are rather promiſes than propoſitions; and the whole Creed, take it in any of the old Form is but an Analyſis of that which St. *Paul* calls the word of ſalvation, whereby we ſhall be ſaved, viz. that we confeſs Jeſus to be Lord, and that God raiſed him from the dead; the firſt whereof he became our Law-giver and Guardian; by the ſecond he was our Saviour. The other things are but parts and main articles of thoſe two. Now what reaſon there is in the world that can enwrap any thing elſe upon the foundation; that is, in the whole body of Articles ſimply and inſeparably neceſſary, and the prime original neceſſity of Faith, I can poſſibly imagine. Theſe do the work, therefore nothing can upon the true ground reaſon enlarge the neceſſity to the inclusion of other Articles.

Numb. 9.

Now if more were neceſſary than the Articles of the Creed, I demand why was it made ſo?

* *Vide Iſidor. de Eccleſ. offic. lib. 1. cap. 20. Suidam, Technicum, lib. 2. c. 30. adverſ. Venant. For. in Exeg. Symb. Feuardent, in Iren. lib. 1. c. 2.*

* Characteriſtick note of a Chriſtian from a Heretick or a Jew, or an Infidel? or to what purpoſe was it compoſed? Or if this was intended as ſufficient, did the Apoſtles or thoſe Churches which they founded, know any thing more to be neceſſary? If they did not, then either nothing more is neceſſary (I ſpeak of matter meer belief) or they did not know all the matter.

the Lord, and ſo were unfit Diſpenſers of the myſteries of the Kingdom; or if they did know more was neceſſary, and yet would not inſert it, they did an act of publick notice, and conſign'd it to all Ages of the Church to no purpoſe, unleſs to beguile credulous people by making them believe their faith was ſufficient, having tryed it by that touch-ſtone Apoſtolicall, when there was no ſuch matter.

But if this was ſufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the Apoſtles admitted all to their Communion that believed this Creed, why ſhall we exclude any that preſerve the ſame intire? why is not our Faith of theſe Articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven, as it was in the Churches Apoſtolicall? who had guides more infallible that might without error have taught them ſuperſtructures enough, if they had been neceſſary: and ſo they did? But that they did not inſert them into the Creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty, as theſe Articles, makes it clear to my underſtanding, that other things were not neceſſary, but theſe were; that whatever profit and advantages might come from other Articles, yet theſe were ſufficient, and however certain perſons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and ſolely foundation of Faith upon which all perſons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was therefore neceſſary to be taught to all, becauſe of neceſſity to be believ'd by all: So that altho' other perſons might commit a delinquency *in genere morum*, if they did not know or did not believe, much more, becauſe they were obliged to further diſquiſitions in order to other ends,

yet

yet none of theſe who held the Creed in-
could periſh for want of neceſſary faith, tho'
poſſibly he might for ſupine negligence or
cted ignorance, or ſome other fault which
influence upon his opinions, and his underſtand-
ing, he having a new ſupervening obligation
ex accidente to know and believe more.

Numb. 11.

Neither are we obliged to make theſe Ar-
cles more particular and minute than the Creed.
For ſince the Apoſtles and indeed our bleſſed Lord
himſelf promiſed heaven to them who believe
him to be the Chriſt that was to come into
world, and that he who believes in him, ſhould
be partaker of the reſurrection and life eternal,
he will be as good as his word: yet becauſe
this Article was very general, and a compleat
or rather than a ſingle propoſition; the Apoſ-
tles and others our Fathers in Chriſt did make
it more explicite, and though they have ſaid
more than what lay entire and ready form'd
the boſom of the great Article, yet they made
their extracts, to great purpoſe, and abſolute
ſufficiency, and therefore there needs no more
deductions or remoter conſequences from the
firſt great Article, than the Creed of the Apoſ-
tles. For although whatſoever is certainly deduc-
ed from any of theſe Articles made already
explicite, is as certainly true, and as much to
be believed as the Article it ſelf, becauſe *ex
his poſſunt nil niſi vera ſequi*, yet becauſe it is not
certain that our deductions from them are cer-
tain, and what one calls evident, is ſo obvious
to another, that he believes it falſe; it is the beſt
and only ſafe courſe to reſt in that explication
the Apoſtles have made, becauſe if any of theſe
Apoſtolical deductions were not demonſtrated

vidently to follow from that great Article to which salvation is promised, yet the authority of them who compil'd the Symbol, the plain description of the Articles from the words of scriptures, the evidence of reason demonstrating these to be the whole foundation, are sufficient upon great grounds of reason to ascertain us; but if we go farther, besides the easiness of being deceived, we relying upon our own discourses, (which though they may be true and then bind us to follow them, but yet no more than when they only seem truest,) yet they cannot make the thing certain to another, much less necessary in it self. And since God would not bind us upon pain of sin and punishment, to make deductions our selves, much less would he bind us to follow another mans Logick as an Article of our Faith; I say much less another mans; for our own integrity (for we will certainly be true to our selves, and do our own business heartily) is as fit and proper to be employed as another mans ability. He cannot secure me that his ability is absolute and the greatest, but I can be more certain that my own purposes and fidelity to my self is such. And since it is necessary to rest somewhere, lest we should run to an infinity, it is best to rest there where the Apostles and the Churches Apostolical rested; when not only they who are able to judge, but others who are not, are equally ascertained of the certainty and of the sufficiency of that application.

This I say, not that I believe it unlawful *Numb. 12.* unsafe for the Church or any of the *Antichristian religionis*, or any wise man to extend his own Creed to any thing may certainly follow from any one of the Articles; but I say, that

no such deduction is fit to be prest on other an Article of Faith; and that every deduction which is so made, unless it be such a thing at first evident to all, is but sufficient to maintain humane Faith, nor can it amount to a divine; much less can be obligatory to bind a person to a differing persuasion to subscribe under pain of losing his Faith, or being a Heretick. For this is a demonstration, that nothing can be necessary to be believed under pain of damnation, such propositions of which it is certain that God hath spoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certain that this is their sense and purpose. For if the sense be uncertain, we can no more be obliged to believe it in a certain sense, than we are to believe it at all, if it were not certain that God delivered it. But if it be only certain that God spake it, and not certain to what sense our Faith of it is to be as indeterminate as the sense, and it can be no other in the nature of the thing, nor is it consonant to Gods justice to believe of him that he can or will require more. And this is of the nature of those propositions which *Aristotle* calls *θεορις*, to which without further probation, all wise men will give assent at its first publication. And therefore deductions inevident, from the evident and plain basis of Faith, are as great recessions from the obligation, as they are from the simplicity, and certainty of the Article. And this I also affirm, although the Church of any one denomination, or represented in a council, shall make the deduction a declaration. For unless Christ had promised the Spirit to protect every particular Church from all errors less material, unless he had promised an absolute universal infallibility *etiam in minoribus*, unless super-structures be of the same necessity

tity with the foundation, and that Gods Spirit
 th not only preſerve his Church in the being
 a Church, but in a certainty of not ſaying any
 ng that is leſs certain; and that whether they
 ll or no too; we may be bound to peace and
 edience, to ſilence and to charity, but have
 t a new Article of Faith made; and a new
 oſition though conſequent (as 'tis ſaid) from
 Article of Faith becomes not therefore a part
 the Faith, nor of abſolute neceſſity, *Quid un-* Contra hereſ.
cap. 32.
um aliud Eccleſia Conciliorum decretis eniſa eſt,
ut quod antea ſimpliciter credebatur, hoc idem
ea diligentius crederetur, ſaid *Vicentius Lirinen-*
 whatſoever was of neceſſary Belief before is
 ſtill, and hath a new degree added by reaſon
 a new light or a clear explication; but no pro-
 ſitions can be adopted into the foundation. The
 urch hath power to intend our Faith, but not
 extend it; to make our belief more evident,
 t not more large and comprehensive. For
 riſt and his Apoſtles concealed nothing that
 s neceſſary to the integrity of Chriſtian Faith,
 ſalvation of our Souls; Chriſt declared all the
 ill of his Father, and the Apoſtles were Stew-
 ds and Diſpenſers of the ſame Myſteries, and
 ere faithful in all the houſe, and therefore con-
 ealed nothing, but taught the whole Doctrin
 Chriſt; ſo they ſaid themſelves. And in-
 ed if they did not teach all the Doctrin
 ith, an Angel or a Man might have taught us
 her things than what they taught, without de-
 rving an Anathema, but not without deſerving
 bleſſing for making up that Faith intire which
 e Apoſtles left imperfect. Now if they taught
 the whole body of Faith, either the Church
 the following Ages loſt part of the Faith (and
 en where was their Infallibility, and the effect

of thoſe glorious promiſes to which ſhe pretends and hath certain Title; for ſhe may as well introduce a falſhood as loſe a truth, it being much promiſed to her that the Holy Ghoſt ſhall lead her into all truth, as that ſhe ſhall be ſerved from all errors as appears, *Joh. 16.* Or if ſhe retain'd all the Faith which Chriſt and his Apoſtles conſign'd and taught, then no man can by declaring any point, make that to be an Article of Faith which was not ſo in all Ages of Chriſtianity before ſuch declaration. And

* *Vide Jacob Almain. in 3. Sent. d. 25. 2. Unic. Dub. 3. Patet ergo, quod nulla veritas eſt Catholica ex approbatione Eccleſiæ vel Papæ, Gabr. Biel. in 3. Sent. Diſt. 25. q. 9. Unic. art. 3. Dub. 3. ad finem.*

deed if the * Church by declaring an Article make that to be neceſſary, which before was neceſſary, I do not ſee how it can ſtand with the charity of the Church ſo to do (eſpecially after ſo long experience ſhe hath had that all men will not believe every ſuch deciſion or explication) for by ſo doing ſhe makes the narrow way to Heaven narrower, and chalks out one way more to the Devil than he had before, and the way was broad enough when it was at the narroweſt. For before, differing perſons might be ſaved in diverſity of perſuaſions, and now after this declaration if they cannot, there is no other alteration made, but that ſome ſhall be damned who before even in the ſame diſputations and belief ſhould have been beatified perſons. For therefore, it is well for the Father of the Primitive Church that their errors were diſcovered, for if they had been conteſted that would have been called diſcovery enough

Bellar. de laicis l. 3. c. 20. §. ad primam confirmationem.

vel errores emendaſſent, vel ab Eccleſiâ ejeſtiſent. But it is better as it was, they went to Heaven by that good fortune, whereas otherwiſe they might have gone to the Devil. And yet there were ſome errors, particularly that of St. Cyprian that was diſcovered, and he went

Hear

Heaven, 'tis thought; possibly they might so too
for all this pretence. But suppose it true, yet
whether that declaration of an Article of which
with safety we either might have doubted or
been ignorant, do more good, than the damn-
ing of those many Souls occasionally, but yet
certainly and fore-knowingly does hurt, I
leave it to all wise and good Men to determine.
And yet besides this, it cannot enter into my
thoughts, that it can possibly consist with Gods
goodness, to put it into the power of man so
culpably and openly to alter the paths and in-
lets to Heaven, and to streighten his mercies,
unless he had furnished these men with an infal-
lible judgment and an infallible prudence, and
never failing charity, that they should never
do it but with great necessity, and with great
truth, and without ends and humane designs,
of which I think no Arguments can make us cer-
tain, what the Primitive Church hath done in
this case: I shall afterwards consider and give an
account of it, but for the present, there is no in-
security in ending there were the Apostles end-
ed, in building where they built, in resting where
they left us, unless the same infallibility which
they had, had still continued, which I think I
shall hereafter make evident it did not: And
therefore those extensions of Creed which were
made in the first Ages of the Church, although
for the matter they were most true; yet because
it was not certain that they should be so, and
they might have been otherwise, therefore they
could not be in the same order of Faith nor in
the same degrees of necessity to be believ'd with
the Articles Apostolical; and therefore whe-
ther they did well or no in laying the same
weight upon them, or whether they did lay the
same

ſame weight or no, we will afterwards conſider we need
Numb. 13. But to return. I conſider that a foundation foundat
 Faith cannot alter, unleſſa new building be to collecti
 made, the foundation is the ſame ſtill; and aid is
 foundation is no other but that which Chriſt ed or
 and his Apoſtles laid, which Doctrine is li neit
 himſelf, yeſterday and to day, and the ſame was no
 ever: So that the Articles of neceſſary belief things
 all (which are the only foundation) they can ear off
 be ſeveral in ſeveral Ages, and to ſeveral were
 ſons. Nay, the ſentence and declaration of the accide
 Church, cannot lay this foundation, or make know
 ny thing of the foundation, becauſe the Church know
 cannot lay her own foundation; we muſt ſe in the
 poſe her to be a building, and that ſhe relies ther
 on the foundation, which is therefore ſuppoſe ſince
 to be laid before, becauſe ſhe is built upon it, ſome
 (to make it more explicate) becauſe a cloud ſary,
 ariſe from the Allegory of building and found Chriſt
 tion, it is plainly thus; The Church being a com the l
 pany of Men obliged to the duties of Faith and cles,
 obedience, the duty and obligation being of the as ex
 faculties of will and underſtanding to adhere conſi
 ſuch an object, muſt pre-ſuppoſe the object teſſe
 ready for them; for as the object is before the the A
 act in order of nature, and therefore not to tion
 produc'd or encreaſed by the faculty (which in o
 receptive, cannot be active upon its proper ob this
 ject:) So the object of the Churches Faith is are
 order of nature before the Church, or before for
 the act and habit of Faith, and therefore cannot ther
 be enlarged by the Church, any more than tily
 act of the viſive faculty can add viſibility to the exp
 object. So that if we have found out what fou cor
 dation, Chriſt and his Apoſtles did lay, that On
 what body and ſyſtem of Articles ſimply ne Ju
 ceſſary they taught and requir'd of us to believe ſec
 we

we need not, we cannot go any further for foundation, we cannot enlarge that ſyſtem or collection. Now then, although all that they ſaid is true, and nothing of it to be doubted or diſ-believed, yet as all that they ſaid, is neither written nor delivered (becauſe all was not neceſſary) ſo we know that of thoſe things which are written, ſome things are as far off from the foundation as thoſe things which were omitted, and therefore although now accidentally they muſt be believ'd by all that know them, yet it is not neceſſary all ſhould know them; and that all ſhould know them in the ſame ſenſe and interpretation, is neither probable nor obligatory; but therefore ſince theſe things are to be diſtinguiſhed by ſome differences of neceſſary and not neceſſary, whether or no is not the declaration of Chriſt and his Apoſtles affixing ſalvation to the belief of ſome great comprehensive Articles, and the act of the Apoſtles rendring them as explicate as they thought convenient, and conſigning that Creed made ſo explicate, as a teſſera of a Chriſtian, as a comprehension of the Articles of his belief, as a ſufficient diſpoſition and an expreſs of the Faith of a *Catechumen* in order to Baptiſm: whether or no I ſay, all this be not ſufficient probation that theſe only are of abſolute neceſſity, that this is ſufficient for meer belief in order to Heaven, and that therefore whoſoever believes theſe Articles heartily and explicity, *Θεὸς μένει ἐν αὐτῷ*, as St. John's expreſſion is, *God dwelleth in him*, I leave it to be conſider'd and judg'd of from the premiſes: Only this, if the old Doctours had been made Judges in theſe Queſtions, they would have paſſed their affirmative; for to inſtance in one for

Lib. de ve.
land. Virg.

all, of this it was said by Tertullian, *Regula*
dem fidei una omnino est sola immobilis & irrefra-
mabilis, &c. Hâc lege fidei manente cetera jam in
ciplina & conversationis admittunt novitatem
rectionis, operante scil. & proficiente usque in
nem gratia Dei. This Symbol is the one suffi-
cient immoveable unalterable and unchangeable
rule of Faith, that admits no increment or de-
crement; but if the integrity and unity of this
be preserv'd, in all other things men may take
liberty of enlarging their knowledges and pro-
phesyings, according as they are assisted by the
grace of God.

S E C T. II.

Of Heresy and the nature of it, and that it
is to be accounted according to the strict ca-
pacity of Christian Faith, and not in Opini-
ons Speculative, nor ever to pious Per-
sons.

Numb. 1.

AND thus I have represented a short draught
of the Object of Faith, and its founda-
tion; the next consideration in order to our
main design, is to consider what was and what
ought to be the judgment of the Apostles con-
cerning Heresy: For although there are more
kinds of vices, than there are of virtues; yet
the number of them is to be taken by account-
ing the transgressions of their virtues, and by
the limits of Faith; we may also reckon the
Analogy and proportions of Heresy; that as we

have seen who was called faithfull by the Apostolical men, we may also perceive who were listed by them in the Catalogue of Hereticks, that we in our judgments may proceed accordingly.

And first the word Heresy is used in Scripture indifferently, in a good sense for a Sect or Division of Opinion, and men following it, sometimes in a bad sense, for a false Opinion signally condemned; but these kind of people were then call'd Anti-christs and false Prophets more frequently than Hereticks, and then there were many of them in the world. But it is observable that no Heresies are noted *signantèr* in Scripture, but such as are great errors practical in *materiâ pietatis*, such whose doctrines taught impiety, or such who denyed the coming of Christ directly or by consequence, not remote or wiredrawn, but prime and immediate: And therefore in the Code de *S. Trinitate & fide Catholica*, heresy is called ἀσεβὴς δόξα, καὶ ἀθέμιτος διδασκαλία, a wicked Opinion and an ungodly doctrine.

Numb. 2.

The first false doctrine we find condemned Numb. 3. by the Apostles was the opinion of *Simon Magnus*, who thought the Holy Ghost was to be bought with money; he thought very dishonourably of the blessed Spirit; but yet his followers are rather noted of a vice, neither resting in the understanding, nor derived from it, but wholly practical; 'Tis Simony, not Heresy, though in *Simon* it was a false opinion proceeding from a low account of God, and promoted by his own ends of pride and covetousness: The great heresy that troubled them was the doctrine of the necessity of keeping the Law of *Moses*, the necessity of Circumcision; against which doctrine they were there-

therefore zealous, becauſe it was a direct overthrow to the very end and excellency of Chriſt coming. And this was an opinion moſt pertinaciously and obſtinately maintain'd by the Jews, and had made a Sect among the *Galatians*, and this was indeed wholly in opinion; and againſt it the Apoſtles oppoſed two Articles of the Creed, which ſerv'd at ſeveral times according as the Jews chang'd their opinion, and left ſome degrees of their error, *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and I believe the holy Catholick Church*. For they therefore preſs'd the neceſſity of *Moses* Law, becauſe they were unwilling to forgoe the glorious appellative of being Gods own peculiar people; and that Salvation was of the Jews, and that the reſt of the world were capable of that grace, no otherwiſe but by adoption into their Religion, and becoming Proſelytes. But this was ſo ill a doctrine, as that it overthrew the great benefits of Chriſt's coming; for *if they were circumciſ'd, Chriſt profited them nothing*, meaning this, that Chriſt will not be a Saviour to them who do not acknowledge him for their Law-Giver; and they neither confeſs him their Law-Giver nor their Saviour, that look to be juſtified by the Law of *Moses*, and obſervation of legal rites; ſo that this doctrine was a direct enemy to the foundation, and therefore the Apoſtles were ſo zealous againſt it. Now then that other opinion, which the Apoſtles met at *Jeruſalem* to reſolve, was but a piece of that opinion; for the Jews and Proſelytes were drawn off from their lees and ſediment, by degrees, ſtep by ſtep. At firſt, they would not endure any ſhould be ſaved but themſelves, and their Proſelytes. Being wrought off from this height by Miracles, and preaching

of the Apoſtles, they admitted the Gentiles to a poſſibility of ſalvation, but yet ſo as to hope for it by *Moses's* Law. From which foolery, when they were with much ado diſſuaded, and told that ſalvation was by Faith in Chriſt, not by works of the Law, yet they reſolved to plow with an Ox and an Aſs ſtill, and joyn *Moses* with Chriſt; not as ſhadow and ſubſtance, but in an equal confederation, Chriſt ſhould ſave the Gentiles if he was helpt by *Moses* but alone Chriſtianity could not do it. Againſt this the Apoſtles aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, and made a deciſion of the Queſtion, tying ſome of the Gentiles (ſuch only who were blended by the Jews in *communi patria*) to obſervation of ſuch Rites which the Jews had derived by tradition from *Noah*, intending by this to ſatisſie the Jews as far as might be with a reaſonable compliance and condeſcenſion; the other Gentiles who were unmixt, in the mean while, remaining free as appears in the liberty St. *Paul* gave the Church of *Corinth* of eating Idol Sacrifices (expreſſly againſt the Decree at *Jeruſalem*) ſo it were without ſcandal. And yet for all this care and curious diſcretion, a little of the leaven ſtill remain'd: All this they thought did ſo concern the Gentiles, that it was totally impertinent to the Jews; ſtill they had a diſtinction to ſatisſie the letter of the Apoſtles Decree, and yet to perſiſt in their old opinion; and this ſo continued that fifteen Chriſtian Biſhops in ſucceſſion were circumciſed, even until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, under *Adrian*, as *Enſebius* reports.

*Enſeb. l. 4.
Eccleſ. hiſt.
c. 5.*

First, By the way let me obſerve, that never any matter of Queſtion in the Chriſtian Church was determin'd with greater ſolemnity, or more full

Numb. 4.

full

full authority of the Church than this Queſtion concerning Circumciſion: No leſs than the whole College of the Apoſtles and Elders at *Jeruſalem*, and that with a Decree of the higheſt ſanction, *Viſum eſt ſpiritui ſancto & nobis*. Secondly, Either the caſe of the Hebrews in particular was omitted, and no determination concerning them, whether it were neceſſary or lawful for them to be circumciſed, or elſe it was involv'd in the Decree, and intended to oblige the Jews. If it was omitted ſince the Queſtion was *de re neceſſaria* (for *dico vobis*, I Paul ſay unto you, if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing) it is very remarkable how the Apoſtles to gain the Jews, and to comply with their violent prejudice in behalf of *Moses's* Law, did for a time Tolerate their diſſent *etiam in re aliquā neceſſariā*, which I doubt not but was intended as a precedent for the Church to imitate for ever after: But if it was not omitted, either all the multitude of the Jews (which St. James then their Biſhop expreſſed by *μυριάδες*; Thou ſeeſt how many myriads of Jews there be) believe and yet are zelots for the Law; and Eſebius ſpeaking of Juſtus ſays, he was one of *infinitā multitudine eorum qui ex circumciſione Jeſum credebant*,) I ſay all theſe did periſh, and their believing in Chriſt ſerv'd them to no other ends, but in the infinity of their torments to upbraid them with hypocriſie and hereſie; or if they were ſav'd, it is apparent how merciful God was and pitiful to humane infirmities, that in a point of ſo great concernment did pity their weakneſs, and pardon their errors, and love their good mind, ſince their prejudice was little leſs than inſuperable,

Act. 21. 20.

L. 3. 32. Ec-
cleſ. Hiſt.

and had fair probabilities, at least, it was such as might abuse a wise and good man (and so it did many) they did *bono animo errare*. And if I mistake not, this consideration St. Paul urg'd as 1. Tim. 1. a reason why God forgave him who was a Persecutor of the Saints, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, that is, he was not convinc'd in his understanding, of the truth of the way which he persecuted, he in the mean while remaining in that incredulity not out of malice or ill ends, but the mistakes of humanity and a pious zeal, therefore *God had mercy on him*: And so it was in this great Question of circumcision, here only was the difference, the invincibility of St. Paul's error, and the honesty of his heart caused God so to pardon him as to bring him to the knowledge of Christ, which God therefore did because it was necessary, *necessitate medii*; no salvation was consistent with the actual remanency of that error; but in the Question of Circumcision, although they by consequence did overthrow the end of Christ's coming: yet because it was such a consequence, which they being hindred by a prejudice not impious did not perceive, God tolerated them in their error till time and a continual dropping of the lessons and dictates Apostolical did wear it out, and then the doctrine put on it's apparel, and became cloathed with necessity; they in the mean time so kept to the foundation, that is, Jesus Christ crucified and risen again, that although this did make a violent concussion of it, yet they held fast with their heart, what they ignorantly destroyed with their tongue, (which *Saul* before his conversion did not) that God upon other Titles, than an actual dereliction of their error did bring them to Salvation.

And

Numb. 5. And in the deſcent of ſo many years, I find not any one Anathema paſt by the Apoſtles or their Succeſſors upon any of the Biſhops of *Jeruſalem*, or the Believers of the Circumciſion, and yet it was a point as clearly determined, and of as great neceſſity as any of thoſe Queſtions that at this day vex and crucifie Chriſtendom.

Numb. 6. Beſides this Queſtion, and that of the Reſurrection, commenc'd in the Church of *Corinth*, and promoted with ſome variety of ſenſe by *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* in *Asia*, who ſaid that the Reſurrection was paſt already, I do not remember any other heresy nam'd in Scripture, but ſuch as were errors of impiety, *ſeductions in materiâ practica*, ſuch as was particularly, forbidding to marry, and the heresy of the *Nicelaitans*, a doctrine that taught the neceſſity of luſt and frequent fornication.

Numb. 7. But in all the Animadverſions againſt errors made by the Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, no pious perſon was condemn'd, no man that did invincibly err, or *bona mente*; but ſomething that was amiſs in *genere morum*, was that which the Apoſtles did redargue. And it is very conſiderable, that even they of the Circumciſion who in ſo great numbers did heartily believe in Chriſt, and yet moſt violently retain Circumciſion, and without Queſtion went to Heaven in great numbers; yet of the number of theſe very men, they came deeply under cenſure, when to their error they added impiety: So long as it ſtood with charity and without humane ends and ſecular intereſts, ſo long it was either innocent or conniv'd at; but when they grew covetous, and for filthy lucre ſake taught the ſame doctrine which others did in the ſimplicity of their hearts, then they turn'd Hereticks,

then they were term'd Seducers; and Titus was commanded to look to them, and to ſilence them; For there are many that are intractable and vain bablers, Seducers of minds, eſpecially they of the Circumciſion, who ſeduce whole houſes, teaching things that they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake. Theſe indeed were not to be indured, but to be ſilenced, by the conviction of ſound doctrine, and to be rebuked ſharply, and avoided.

For hereſy is not an error of the underſtand- Numb. 8.
ing, but an error of the will. And this is clearly

inſinuated in Scripture, in the ſtile whereof Faith and a good life are made one duty, and vice is called oppoſite to Faith, and Hereſy oppoſed to holineſs and ſanctity. So in St. Paul, 1 Tim. 1.

For (ſaith he) the end of the Commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conſcience, and faith unfained; a quibus quod aberrarunt quidam, from which charity, and purity, and goodneſs, and ſincerity, becauſe ſome have wandred, deflexerunt ad vaniloquium. And immediately after, he reckons the oppoſitions to faith and ſound doctrine, and inſtances only in vices that ſtain the lives of Chriſtians, the unjuſt, the unclean, the uncharitable, the lyer, the perjur'd perſon, & ſi quis alius qui ſana doctrina adverſatur; theſe are the enemies of the true doctrine. And therefore St. Peter having given

in charge, to add to our vertue patience, temperance, charity, and the like; gives this for a reaſon, for if theſe things be in you and abound, ye ſhall be fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. So that knowledge and faith is inter præcepta morum, is part of a good life: * And Saint Paul calls Faith or the form of ſound words, καὶ εὐσεβειαν διδασκαλίαν,

* Quid igitur creditas vel fides? opinor fideliter hominem Chriſto credere, id eſt, fideliter Deo eſſe, hoc eſt, fideliter Deum mandata ſervare. So Sal-
vian.

the

† *Δοξίαι*
 † *Χεῖρ*
αὐτῶν *Ἰσχυ-*
αῖα;
 That's our
 Religion, or
 Faith, the
 whole man-
 ner of ſer-
 ving God,
C. de ſummā
Trinit. & fide
Cathol.

the doctrine that is according to godline
 1 Tim. 6. 3. † And *veritati credere*, and
injustitiā sibi complacere, are by the same
 poſtle opposed, and intimate, that piety
 faith is all one thing; faith must be *ὁρῶνς καὶ ἀκούωνς*
 intire and holy too, or it is not right. It
 the heresy of the *Gnosticks*, that it was
 matter how men lived, so they did but believe
 aright: Which wicked doctrine *Tatianus* a lea-
 ned Christian did so detest, that he fell in
 a quite contrary, *Non est curandum quid quis
 credat, id tantum curandum est quod quis
 faciat*; And thence came the Sect *Encratites*.
 Both these heresies sprang from the too
 distinguishing the faith from the piety and good
 life of a Christian: They are both but one doctrine.
 However, they may be distinguished, if we
 speak like Philosophers; they cannot be distinguished,
 when we speak like Christians. For to
 believe what God hath commanded, is in order
 to a good life; and to live well is the product
 that believing, and as proper emanations from
 as from its proper principle, and as heat
 from the fire. And therefore, in Scripture
 they are used promiscuously in sense, and in ex-
 pression, as not only being subjected in the same
 person, but also in the same faculty faith is
 truly seated in the will as in the understanding,
 and a good life as meerly derives from the un-
 derstanding as the will. Both of them are
 matters of choice and of election, neither of
 them an effect natural and invincible or neces-
 sary antecedently (*necessaria ut fiant, non necessaria
 facta.*) And indeed if we remember that
 St. Paul reckons heresy amongst the works of the
 flesh, and ranks it with all manner of practical
 impieties, we shall easily perceive that if a man
 mingles

ingles not a vice with his opinion, if he be innocent in his life, though deceiv'd in his doctrine, his error is his miſery, not his crime; makes him an argument of weakneſs and an object of pity, but not a perſon ſealed up to ruin and reprobation.

For as the nature of faith is, ſo is the nature of hereſy, contraries having the ſame proportion and commenfuration. Now Faith, if it be taken for an act of the underſtanding meerly, is far from being that excellent grace that juſtifies us, that it is not good at all, in any kind *in genere nature*, and makes the underſtanding better in it ſelf, or pleaſing to God, juſt as ſtrength doth the Arm, or Beauty the Face, or Health the Body; theſe are natural perfecti-
 ons indeed, and ſo knowledge and a true belief to the underſtanding. But this makes us not all more acceptable to God; for then the unlearned were certainly in a damnable condition, and all good Scholars ſhould be ſaved whereas I am afraid too much of the contrary is true. But unleſs Faith be made moral by the mixtures of choice and charity, it is nothing but a natural perfection, not a grace or a virtue; and this is demonſtrably prov'd in this, that by the confeſſion of all men of all intereſts and perſuaſions, in matters of meer belief, invincible ignorance is our excuſe if we be deceived, which could not be, but that neither to believe right is commendable, nor to believe a-
 miſ is reprobable; but where both one and the other is voluntary and choſen antecedently or conſequently, by prime election or *ex poſt facto*, and ſo comes to be conſider'd in morality, and as part of a good life or a bad life reſpective-
 ly. Juſt ſo it is in hereſy, if it be a deſign of
 D ambition,

* *Alieni ſunt
à veritate qui
ſe obarmant
multitudine.
Chryſt.*

ambition, and making of a Sect (ſo *Erasmus* pounds *St. Paul* αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον, *ſectarum* * *thorem*) if it be for filthy lucre ſake as it was ſome, that were of the circumciſion, if it be pride and love of preheminance, as it was *Diotrephes* ὁ φιλοπρεσβύων, or out of peeviſhneſs and indocibleneſs of diſpoſition, or of a contentious ſpirit; that is, that their feet are ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel peace; in all theſe caſes the errour is juſtly damnable, as is its principle, but therefore damnable not of it ſelf, but by reaſon of its malignancy. And if any ſhall ſay any otherwiſe, is to ſay that ſome Men ſhall be damned who they cannot help it, periſh without their own fault, and be miſerable for ever, becauſe of their unhappineſs to be deceived through their own ſimplicity and natural or accidental, but inculpable infirmity.

Numb. 10. For it cannot ſtand with the goodneſs of God, who does ſo know our Infirmities, that he pardons many things in which our wills indeed have the leaſt ſhare (but ſome they have but are overborn with the violence of an impetuous temptation; I ſay, it is inconſiſtent with his goodneſs to condemn thoſe who err when the error hath nothing of the will in it, who therefore cannot repent of their error, becauſe they believe it true, who therefore cannot make compensation becauſe they know not that they are tyed to dereliſtion of it. And altho' all Hereticks are in this condition, that they believe their errors to be true; yet there is a vaſt difference between them who believe ſo out of ſimplicity, and them who are given over to believe a lye, as a puniſhment or a ſeſt of ſome other wickedneſs or impiety.

For all have a concomitant aſſent to the truth of what they believe; and no man can at the ſame time believe what he does not believe, but this aſſent of the underſtanding in Here-ticks is cauſed not by force of Argument, but the Argument is made forcible by ſomething that is amiſs in his will; and although a He-retick may peradventure have a ſtronger Ar-gument for his error than ſome true Believer for his right perſuaſion? yet it is not conſide-rable how ſtrong his Argument is (becauſe in a weak underſtanding, a ſmall Motive will pro-duce a great perſuaſion, like gentle Phyſick in a weak Body) but that which here is considera-ble, is, what it is that made his Argument for-cible. If his invincible and harmleſs preju-dice, if his weakneſs, if his education, if his miſ-taking piety, if any thing that hath no venom, nor a ſting in it, there the heartineſs of his per-ſuaſion is no ſin, but his miſery and his excuſe; but if any thing that is evil *in genere morum* did in-cline his underſtanding, if his opinion did com-mence upon pride, or is nourished by covetouſ-neſs, or continues through ſtupid careleſneſs, or increaſes by pertinacy, or is confirmed by obſtinacy, then the innocency of the error is diſbanded, his miſery is changed into a crime, and begins its own puniſhment. But by the way I muſt obſerve, that when I reckoned ob-ſtinacy amongſt thoſe things which make a falſe opinion criminal, it is to be underſtood with ſome diſcretion and diſtinction. For there is an obſtinacy of will which is indeed highly guilty of miſdemeanour, and when the School makes pertinacy or obſtinacy to be the for-mality of hereſy, they ſay not true at all, un-leſs it be meant the obſtinacy of the will and

choice; and if they do, they ſpeak imperfectly and inartificially, this being but one of the cauſes that makes error become hereſy; the adequacy and perfect formality of hereſy is whatſoever makes the error voluntary and vitious, as is clear in Scripture, reckoning Covetouſneſs, Pride, and Luſt, and whatſoever is vitious to be its cauſes? (and in habits, or moral changes and productions, whatever alters the eſſence of a habit, or gives it a new formality, is not to be reckoned the efficient but the form) but there is alſo an obſtinacy (you may call it) which indeed, is nothing but a reſolution and confirmation of underſtanding, which is not in a man's power honeſtly to alter, and it is not all the commands of humanity, that can be Arguments ſufficient to make a man leave believing that for which he thinks he hath reaſon, and in which he hath ſuch Arguments as heartily convince him. Now the perſiſting in an opinion finally, and againſt all the confidence and ſeriousneſs of humane commands, that makes not this criminal obſtinacy, if the erring perſon have ſo much humility of will as to ſubmit to whatever God ſays, and that no vice in the will hinders him from believing it. So that we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh continuance in opinion from obſtinacy, confidence of underſtanding from peeviſhneſs of affection, a man being convinced from a reſolution never to be convinc'd upon humane ends and vitious principles: *Scimus quosdam quod ſemel imbibere vinum le deponere, nec propoſitum ſuum facile mutare, ſalvo inter collegas pacis & concordie vinculo perſequeſſe ſua propria quæ apud ſe ſemel ſint uſurpata retinere. Qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus, aut ſuam gem damus,* ſaith St. Cyprian. And he himſelf

Lib. 2. Ep. 1.

was ſuch a one; for he perſiſted in his opinion of rebaptization until death, and yet his obſtinacy was not called criminal, or his error turned to hereſy. But to return.

In this ſence, it is that a Heretick is ἀνολογία- Numb. 11. *αὐτοῦ*, ſelf-condemn'd, not by an immediate expreſs ſentence of underſtanding, but by his own act or fault brought into condemnation. As it is in the Canon Law, *Notorius percuffor Clerici* is *ipſo jure* excommunicate, not *per ſententiam latam ab homine*, but *à jure*. No man hath paſſed ſentence *pro tribunali*, but Law hath decreed it *pro edicto*: So it is in the caſe of a Heretick. The underſtanding which is judge, condemns him not by an expreſs ſentence; for he errs with as much ſimplicity in the reſult, as he had malice in the principle: But there is *ſententia lata à jure*, his will which is his law, that hath condemn'd him. And this is gathered from that ſaying of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 13. *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived*: Firſt, they are evil men; malice and peeviſhneſs is in their wills; then they turn Hereticks and ſeduce others, and while they grow worſe and worſe, the error is maſter of their underſtanding, they are deceiv'd themſelves, *given over to believe a lye*, ſaith the Apoſtle: they firſt play the knave, and then play the fool; they firſt ſell themſelves to the purchaſe of vain-glory or ill ends, and then they become poſſeſſed with a lying ſpirit, and believe thoſe things heartily, which if they were honeſt they ſhould with Gods Grace diſcover and diſclaim. So that now we ſee that *bona fides in falſo articulo*, a hearty perſuaſion in a falſe Article does not always make the error to be eſteemed involuntary; but then only

when it is as innocent in the principle as it is confident in the preſent perſuaſion. And ſuch perſons who by their ill lives and vicious actions, or manifeſt deſigns (for by their fruits ye ſhall know them) give teſtimony of ſuch criminal indispoſitions, ſo as competent judges by humane and prudent eſtimate may ſo judge them, then they are to be declared Hereticks, and avoided. And if this were not true, it were vain that the Apoſtle commands us to avoid an Heretick: For no external act can paſs upon a man for a crime that is not cognoſcible.

Numb. 12. Now every Man that errs, though in a matter of conſequence, ſo long as the foundation is intire, cannot be ſuſpected juſtly guilty of a crime to give his error a formality of hereſy, for we ſee many a good Man miſerably deceiv'd (as we ſhall make it appear afterwards) and he that is the beſt amongſt Men, certainly hath ſo much humility to think he may be eaſily deceiv'd, and twenty to one but he is in ſomething or other; yet if his error be not voluntary, and part of an ill life, then becauſe he lives a good life, he is a good Man, and therefore no Heretick: No Man is an Heretick againſt his will. And if it be pretended that every Man that is deceived, is therefore Proud becauſe he does not ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of God or Man reſpectively, and ſo his error becomes a hereſy: To this I anſwer, That there is no Chriſtian Man but will ſubmit his underſtanding to God, and believe whatſoever he hath ſaid; but always provided he knows that God hath ſaid ſo, elſe he muſt do his duty by a readineſs to obey when he ſhall know it. But for obedience or humility of the

under-

underſtanding towards Men, that is a thing of another conſideration, and it muſt firſt be made evident that his underſtanding muſt be ſubmitted to Men; and who thoſe Men are, muſt alſo be certain, before it will be adjudg'd a ſin not to ſubmit. But if I miſtake not Chriſts ſaying [*call no man maſter upon earth*] is ſo great a prejudice againſt this pretence, as I doubt it will go near wholly to make it invalid. So that as the worſhipping of Angels is a humility indeed, but it is voluntary and a will-worſhip to an ill ſence, not to be excuſed by the excellency of humility, nor the virtue of Religion: ſo is the relying upon the judgment of Man, an humility too, but ſuch as comes not under that *ὕπακοὴ πίστεως*, that obedience of Faith which is the duty of every Chriſtian, but intrenches upon that duty which we owe to Chriſt as an acknowledgement that he is our great Maſter, and the Prince of the Catholick Church. But whether it be or be not, if that be the Queſtion whether the diſagreeing perſon be to be determined by the dictates of Men, I am ſure the dictates of Men muſt not determine him in that Queſtion, but it muſt be ſettled by ſome higher principle: So that if of that Queſtion the diſagreeing perſon does opine, or believe, or err *bonâ fide*, he is not therefore to be judg'd a Heretick, becauſe he ſubmits not his underſtanding, becauſe till it be ſufficiently made certain to him that he is bound to ſubmit, he may innocently and piously diſagree, and this not ſubmitting is therefore not a crime (and ſo cannot make a heresy) becauſe without a crime he may lawfully doubt whether he be bound to ſubmit or no, for that's that the Queſtion. And if in ſuch Queſ-

ſtions which have influence upon a whole ſyſtem of Theology, a Man may doubt lawfully if he doubts heartily, becauſe the authority of Men being the thing in Queſtion, cannot be the judge of this Queſtion, and therefore being rejected, or (which is all one) being queſtioned, that is, not believed, cannot render the doubting perſon guilty of Pride, and by conſequence not of hereſy, much more may particular queſtions be doubted of, and the Authority of Men examined, and yet the doubting Perſon be humble enough, and therefore no Heretick for this pretence. And it would be conſidered that Humility is a duty in great ones as well as in Idiots. And as Inferiors muſt not diſagree without Reaſon, ſo neither muſt Superiors preſcribe to others without ſufficient Authority, Evidence and Neceſſity too; And if Rebellion be Pride, ſo is Tyranny; and it being in *materia intellectuali*, both may be guilty of Pride of underſtanding, ſometimes the one in impoſing ſometimes the other in a cauſeleſs diſagreeing but in the Inferiours it is then only the want of Humility, when the guides impoſe or preſcribe what God hath alſo taught, and then it is the diſobeying Gods dictates not Mans, that makes the Sin. But then this conſideration will alſo intervene, that as no dictate of God obliges Men to believe it, unleſs I know it to be ſuch. So neither will any of the dictates of my Superiours, engage my Faith, unleſs I alſo know or have no reaſon to diſ-believe, but that they are warranted to teach them to me, therefore becauſe God hath taught the ſame to them, which if I once know, or have no reaſon to think the contrary, if I diſagree, my Sin is not in reſiſting humane Authority, but Divine.

And therefore the whole buſineſs of ſubmitting our underſtanding to humane authority, comes to nothing; for either it reſolves into the direct duty of ſubmitting to God, or if it be ſpoken of abſtractedly, it is no duty at all.

But this pretence of a neceſſity of humbling the underſtanding, is none of the meanest arts whereby ſome perſons have invaded, and uſurpt a power over mens faith and conſciences, and therefore we ſhall examine the pretence afterwards, and try if God hath inveſted any Man or company of Men with ſuch a power. In the mean time, he that ſubmits his underſtanding to all that he knows God hath ſaid, and is ready to ſubmit to all that he hath ſaid if he but know it, denying his own affections and ends, and intereſts and humane perſuaſions, laying them all down at the foot of his great Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, that man hath brought his underſtanding into ſubjection, and every proud thought unto the obedience of Chriſt, and this is *ὕπακοή πίστεως*, the obedience of Faith, which is the duty of a Chriſtian. Numb. 13.

But to proceed: Beſides theſe heresies noted in Scripture, the age of the Apoſtles, and that which followed, was infeſted with other heresies; but ſuch as had the ſame formality and malignity with the precedent, all of them either ſuch as taught practical impieties, or denied an Article of the Creed. *Egeſippus* in *Eusebius* reckons ſeven only prime heresies that ſought to deſlower the purity of the Church: That of *Simon*, that of *Thebutes*, of *Cleobius*, of *Dofitheus*, of *Gorthens*, of *Masborheus*; I ſuppoſe *Cerimthus* to have been the ſeventh man, though he expreſs him not: But of theſe, except the laſt, we know no particulars; but that *Egeſippus* ſays, Numb. 14.

says, they were false Christs, and that the doctrine was directly against God and his blessed Son. *Menander* also was the first of Sect, but he bewitched the people with Sorceries. *Cerintus* his doctrine pretended Enthusiasm or a new Revelation, and ended in lust and impious theorems in matter of uncleanness. The * *Ebionites* denied Christ to be Son of God, and affirmed him $\psi\lambda\delta\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\theta\rho\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ begot by natural generation, (by occasion of which and the importunity of the *Asian Bishops* St. *John* writ his Gospel) and taught the observation of *Moses's* Law. *Basilides* taught lawful to renounce the faith, and take false oaths in time of Persecution. *Carpocrates* was a very bedlam, half-witch, and quite mad-man, and practis'd lust, which he call'd the secret operations to overcome the Potentates of the world. Some more there were, but of the same nature and pest, not of a nicety in dispute, not a question of secret Philosophy, not of volumes, and undiscernible propositions, but open defiances of all Faith, of all sobriety, and of sanctity, excepting only the doctrine of the Millennium, which in the best Ages was esteemed no heresy, but true Catholick Doctrine, though since it hath justice done to it, and hath suffered a just condemnation.

Numb. 15. Hitherto, and in these instances, the Church did esteem and judge of heresies, in proportion to the rules and characters of Faith. For Faith being a Doctrine of piety as well as truth, that which was either destructive of fundamental verity, or of Christian sanctity was against Faith, and if it be made a Sect, was heresy; if not, it ended in personal impiety and went farther. But those who as St. *Paul* says, only

only did ſuch things, but had pleaſure in them
 that do them, and therefore taught others to do
 that they impiouſly did dogmatize, they were
 Hereticks both in matter and form, in doctrine
 and deportment, towards God, and towards
 man, and judicable in both tribunals.

But the Scripture and Apoſtolicall Sermons, *Numb. 16.*
 having expreſſed moſt high indignation againſt
 theſe maſters of impious Sects, leaving them
 under prodigious characters, and horrid repre-
 ſentments, as calling them *men of corrupt minds,*
probates concerning the faith, given over to ſtrong
deſuſions to the belief of a lye, falſe Apoſtles, falſe
prophets, men already condemned, and that by
themſelves, Anti-chriſts, enemies of God; and
heresy it ſelf, a work of the fleſh, excluding from
the kingdom of heaven; left ſuch impreſſions in
 the minds of all their ſucceſſours, and ſo much
 zeal againſt ſuch Sects, that if any opinion
 commenc'd in the Church not heard of before;
 ſometimes had this ill luck to run the ſame
 fortune with an old heresy. For becauſe the
 Hereticks did bring in new opinions in matters
 of great concernment, every opinion *de novo*
 brought in was lyable to the ſame exception;
 and becauſe the degree of malignity in every
 error was ſometimes undiſcernible, and moſt
 commonly indemonſtrable, their Zeal was alike
 againſt all; and thoſe Ages being full of piety,
 were fitted to be abuſed with an over-active zeal,
 as wiſe perſons and learned are with a too much
 indifferency.

But it came to paſs, that the further the ſuc- *Numb. 17.*
 ceſſion went from the Apoſtles, the more for-
 ward men were in numbring heresies, and that
 upon ſlighter and more uncertain grounds. Some
 foot-ſteps of this we ſhall find, if we conſider the
 Sects

Sects that are ſaid to have ſprung in the firſt three hundred years, and they were preſent and quick in their ſprings and falls; fourſcore and ſeven of them are reckoned. They were indeed reckoned afterward, and though when they were alive, they were not condemn'd with as much forwardneſs, as after they were dead; yet even then, confidence began to mingle with opinions leſs neceſſary, and miſtakes in judgment were oftner and more publick than they ſhould have been. But if they were forward in their cenſures (as ſometimes ſome of them were) it is no great wonder they were deceiv'd. For what principle or *χρῆσις* had they then to judge of hereſies, or condemn them, beſides the ſingle dictates or decretals of private Biſhops? for Scripture was indifferently pretended by all; and concerning the meaning of it, was the Queſtion: now there was no general Council all that while, no opportunity for the Church to convene; and if we ſearch the communicatory letters of the Biſhops and Martyrs in thoſe days, we ſhall find but few ſentences decretory concerning any Queſtion of Faith, or new ſprung opinion. And in thoſe that did, for ought appears, the perſons were miſreported, or their opinions miſtaken; or at moſt, the ſentence of condemnation was no more but this; Such a Biſhop who hath had the good fortune by poſterity to be reputed a Catholick, did condemn ſuch a man of ſuch an opinion, and yet himſelf err'd in conſiderable matters, but meeting with better neighbours in his life time, and a more charitable poſterity hath his memory preſerv'd in honour. It appears plain enough in the caſe of *Nicholas* the Deacon of *Antioch*, upon a miſtake

e firſt ſtake of his words whereby he taught *παρε-
 ραισιν τῇ σαρκι* to abuſe the fleſh, viz. by acts of
 rſonality and ſelf denial, and mortification;
 were ſome wicked people that were glad to be mi-
 taken and abuſed into a pleaſing crime, preten-
 ded that he taught them to abuſe the fleſh by fil-
 dary commixtures and pollutions: This miſtake
 ning was transmitted to poſterity with a full cry, and
 kes afterwards found out to juſtify an ill opinion
 k that of him. For by St. *Hierome's* time it grew
 e for out of Queſtion, but that he was the vileſt of
 me men, and the worſt of Hereticks; *Nicolaus* *Ad Creſiph.*
 were *Antiochenus*, *omnium immunditiarum conditor*,
 w had *horos duxit famineos*. And again, *Iſte Nicolaus* *Epist. de Fa-*
 dem *Diaconus ita immundus extitit ut etiam in pra-* *biano lapſo.*
 als *epi Domini nefas perpetrârit*: Accuſations that
 rently while the good man liv'd were never thought
 aning of; for his daughters were Virgins, and his
 o ge ſons liv'd in holy cœlibate all their lives, and
 himſelf liv'd in chaſt Wedlock; and yet his
 memory had rotted in perpetual infamy, had
 not God (in whoſe ſight the memory of the
 Saints is precious) preſerv'd it by the testi-
 mony of * *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and from him * *L. 3. Stro-*
 of † *Eusebius* and *Nicephorus*. But in the Ca- *mar.*
 talogue of Hereticks made by *Philaſtrius* he † *L. 3. c. 26.*
 ſtands markt with a black character as guil- *Hiſt.*
 ty of many heresies: By which one testimony
 we may gueſs what truſt is to be given to thoſe
 Catalogues: Well, This good man had ill
 luck to fall into unſkilful hands at firſt; but *Ire-*
neus, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Lactantius*, (to name no
 more) had better fortune; for it being ſtill
 extant in their writings that they were of the
 Millennary opinion, *Papias* before, and *Nepos*
 after were cenſured hardly, and the opinion
 put into the catalogue of heresies, and yet theſe
 men

L. . . c. 23.

men never ſuſpected as guilty, but like children of the Captivity walkt in the middle of the flame, and not ſo much as the ſmell of the fire paſſed on them. But the uncertainty of the things is very memorable, in the Story of *Euſtathius* Biſhop of *Antioch* conteſting with *Euſebius Pamphilus*: *Euſtathius* accuſed *Euſebius* for going about to corrupt the *Nicene Creed* of which ſlander he then acquitted himſelf (ſaith *Socrates*) and yet he is not cleared of poſterity, for ſtill he is ſuſpected, and his fault is not clear: However *Euſebius* then ſcap'd with him but to be quit with his Adverſary, he reſumines and accuſes him to be a favourer of *Sabellius*, rather than of the *Nicene Canons*; an imperfect accuſation, God knows, when the crime was a ſuſpicion, proveable only by actions capable of divers conſtructions, and at the moſt made but ſome degrees of probability, and the fact it ſelf did not conſiſt in indiviſible and therefore was to ſtand or fall, to be improved or leſſen'd according to the will of the Judges, whom in this caſe *Euſtathius* by his ill fortune and a potent Adverſary found himſelf towards him, inſomuch that he was for hereſy propoſed in the Synod of *Antioch*; and though it was laid open in the eye of the world as being moſt ready at hand, with the greateſt charge charged upon every man, and with greateſt difficulty acquitted by any man; yet there were other ſuſpicions raiſed upon him privately, or at leaſt talkt of *ex poſt facto*, and pretended as cauſes of his deprivation, leaſt the ſentence ſhould ſeem too hard for the offence. And yet what they were no man could tell, ſaith the ſtory. But it is obſervable what *Socrates* ſaith, as in excuſe of ſuch proceedings

καὶ οἱ πάντων εἰδέναι ὅτι καταιγισμένων ποιεῖν οἱ L. I. c. 24.

ἀποστολοι, κατηγορέοντες μὲν καὶ ἀσεβῆ λόγοντες, τὰς δὲ
 ἡλίας τὴν ἀσεβείας ἡ λέγουσι. "It is the manner
 among the Bishops, when they accuse them
 that are deposed, they call them wicked,
 but they publish not the actions of their impiety.
 It might possibly be that the Bishops did it
 out of a tenderneſs of their reputation, but yet
 hardly; for to punish a person publicly and
 highly, is a certain declaring the person punish-
 ed guilty of a high crime, and then to conceal
 the fault upon pretence to preserve his repu-
 tation, leaves every man at liberty, to conje-
 cture what he please, who possibly will be-
 lieve it worse than it is, in as much as they
 think his judges so charitable as therefore
 to conceal the fault, least the publishing of
 it should be his greatest punishment, and the
 scandal greater than his deprivation. * How-
 ever this course, if it were just in any, was
 unsafe in all; for it might undo more than
 it could preserve, and therefore is of more
 danger, than it can be of charity. It is there-
 fore too probable that the matter was not
 very fair; for in publick sentence the acts
 ought to be publick; but that they rather pre-
 tend heresy to bring their ends about, shews
 how easie it is to impute that crime, and how
 forward they were to do it: And that they
 might and did then as easily call Heretick as af-
 terward, when *Vigilius* was condemned of he-
 resy for saying there were *Antipodes*; or
 as the Fryars of late did, who suspected Greek
 and Hebrew of heresy, and call'd their Profes-
 sors Hereticks, and had like to have put *Terence*
 and *Demosthenes* into the *Index Expurgatorius*;
 sure enough they rail'd at them *pro concione*,
 there-

* *Simpliciter
 pateat vitium
 fortasse pusil-
 lum, Quod te-
 gitur majus
 creditur esse
 malum. Mar-
 tial.*

therefore becauſe they underſtood them not and had reaſon to believe they would accidentally be enemies to their reputation among the people.

Numb. 13. By this inſtance which was a while after the *Nicene* Council, where the acts of the Church were regular, judicial and orderly, we may gueſs at the ſentences paſſed upon heresy, at ſuch times and in ſuch caſes, when their proceſs was more private, and their acts more tumultuary, their information leſs certain, and therefore their miſtakes more eaſie and frequent. And it is remarkable in the caſe of the heresy of *Montanus*, the ſcene of whoſe heresy lay within the firſt three hundred years, though it was repreſented in the Catalogues afterwards and poſſibly the miſtake concerning it, is to be put upon the ſcore of *Epiphanius*, by whom *Montanus* and his Followers were put into the Catalogue of Hereticks for commanding abſtinenſe from meats, as if they were unclean, and ſuch things themſelves unlawful. Now the truth was *Montanus* ſaid no ſuch thing, but commanded frequent abſtinenſe, enjoyned dry diet, and an aſcetic Table, not for conſcience ſake, but for Diſcipline; and yet becauſe he did this with too much rigour and ſtrictneſs of mandate, the Primitive Church miſlik'd it in him, as being too near their error, who by a Judaical ſuperſtition abſtain'd from meats as from uncleannels. This by the way will much concern them who place too much ſanctity in ſuch Rites and Acts of Diſcipline; for it is an eternal Rule and of never failing truth that ſuch abſtinenſe if they be obtruded as Acts of original immediate duty and ſanctity, are unlawful and ſuperſtitious; if they be for Diſcipline they may be

be good, but of no very great profit; it is that
quella te oſua which St. Paul ſays profiteth
 but little; and juſt in the ſame degree the Pri-
 mitive Church eſteem'd them; for they there-
 fore reprehended *Montanus*, for urging ſuch
 ſtintencies with too much earneſtneſs, though
 not in the way of Diſcipline, for that it was no
 more, *Tertullian*, who was himſelf a *Montaniſt*,
 and knew beſt the opinions of his own Sect,
 juſtifies; and yet *Epiphanius* reporting the er-
 rors of *Montanus*, commends that which *Mon-*
anus truly and really taught; and which the
 primitive Church condemn'd in him, and there-
 fore repreſents that hereſy to another ſenſe,
 and affixes that to *Montanus*, which *Epiphanius*
 believ'd a hereſy, and yet which *Montanus* did
 not teach. And this alſo among many other
 things leſſens my opinion very much of the
 integrity or diſcretion of the old Catalogues
 of Hereticks, and much abates my confidence
 towards them.

And now that I have mentioned them ca-
 ſually in paſſing by, I ſhall give a ſhort account
 of them; for men are much miſtaken; ſome
 their opinions concerning the truth of them,
 believing them to be all true, ſome con-
 ſidering their purpoſe, as thinking them ſuffi-
 cient not only to condemn all thoſe opinions,
 but to be a precedent to
 all Ages of the Church to be free and forward
 in calling Heretick. But he that conſiders the
 Catalogues themſelves, as they are collected
 by *Epiphanius*, *Philaſtrius* and St. *Auſtin*, ſhall
 find that many are reckoned for Hereticks
 for opinions in matters diſputable and unde-
 termin'd, and of no conſequence; and that in
 theſe Catalogues of Hereticks there are men
 E. numbred

numbred for Hereticks, which by every
 reſpectively are acquitted; ſo that there is
 company of men in the world that admit the
 Catalogues as good Records, or ſufficient
 tences of condemnation. For the Churches
 the Reformation, I am certain they acquit
 for denying prayer for the dead, and the
ſtathians for denying invocation of Saints. I
 I am partly of opinion that the Church of
 is not willing to call the *Collyridians* Hereticks
 for offering a Cake to the Virgin *Mary*,
 leſs ſhe alſo will run the hazard of the
 ſentence for offering Candles to her:

• *D. Thom. l. 1.* that they will be glad with *St. Auſtin* (l. 6.
contr. gent. c. 86.) to Excuse the **Tertullianists* for
 23. ſturing God in a viſible corporal repreſentment.
 And yet theſe Sects are put in the book by
Epiphanius and *St. Auſtin*, and ſo
 reſpectively. I remember alſo that the
 are call'd Hereticks, becauſe they reſuſed
 worſhip toward the Eaſt; and yet in that
 ſent, I find not the malignity of a heretick
 nor any thing againſt an Article of Faith
 good manners; and it being only in
 cumſtance, it were hard, if they were other
 wiſe pious men and true believers, to ſend
 them to Hell for ſuch a trifle. The *Parente*
neute reſuſed to follow mens dictates like theſe
 but would expound Scripture according to
 beſt evidence themſelves could find, and
 were called Hereticks whether they expoſed
 ed true or no. The **Pauliciani* for be
 offended at croſſes, the *Proclians* for ſaying
 a regenerate man all his ſins were not
 dead, but only curbed and aſſwaged, were
 Hereticks, and ſo condemned; for ought
 know for affirming that which all pious

• *Euthym.*
 part 1. tit. 21.
Epiphanius hereſ.
 64.

feel in themſelves to be too true. And he that will conſider how numerous the Catalogues are, and to what a volume they are come in their laſt collections, to no leſs than five hundred and twenty (for ſo many hereties and Hereticks are reckoned by *Prateolus*) may think that if a re-trenchment were juſtly made of truths, and all impertinencies, and all opinions, either ſtill diſputable, or leſs conſiderable, the number would much decrease; and therefore that the Catalogues are much amiſs, and the name Heretick is made a *terriculamentum* to fright people from their belief, or to diſcountenance the perſons of Men, and diſrepute them, that their Schools may be empty and their Diſciples few.

So that I ſhall not need to inſtance how *Numb. 20.* that ſome men were called Hereticks by *Philastrius* for rejecting the tranſlation of the Lxx. and following the Bible of *Aquila*, wherein the great faults mentioned by *Philastrius*, are that he tranſlates *χρῖςτὸς* *Θς* not *Chriſtum*, but *unctum Dei*, and inſtead of *Emanuel* writes *Deus nobiſcum*. But this moſt concerns them of the Primitive Church with whom the tranſlation of *Aquila* was in great reputation, *is enim melius plus a quibusdam . . . intellexiſſe laudatur*. It was ſuppoſed he was a greater Clerk and underſtood more than ordinary; it may be ſo he did. But whether yea or no, yet ſince the other Tranſlators by the Confession of *Philastrius*, *quadam prætermiſſe neceſſitate urgens cogereſſentur*, if ſome wiſe men or unwiſe did follow a Tranſlatour who underſtood the Original well (for ſo *Aquila* had learnt amongſt the Jews) it was hard to call men Hereticks for following his Tranſlation, eſpecially ſince

* Philaſtr. 99.
eos inter ha-
reticos nume-
rat qui ſpira-
culum viſe in
libro Genef. in-
terpretantur
animam rati-
onalem, & non
potius gratiam
Spiritus ſan-
cti.

the other Bibles (which were thought to have in them contradictory; and it was confeſſed had omitted ſome things) were excuſed by neceſſity, and the others neceſſity of following *Quila*, when they had no better was not at all conſidered, nor a leſs crime then heresy laid upon their ſcore. * Such another was the heresy of the *Quartodecimani*; for the *Easterlings* were all proclaimed Hereticks for keeping *Easter* after the manner of the East; and as *Scrates* and *Nicephorus* report, the Biſhop of *Rome* was very forward to Excommunicate all the Biſhops of the leſſer *Asia* for obſerving the Feaſt according to the Tradition of their Anceſtors though they did it modeſtly, quietly, and without faction; and although they pretended, and were as well able to prove their Tradition from *St. John*, of ſo obſerving it, as the *Western Church* could prove their Tradition derivated from *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*. If ſuch things as theſe make up the Catalogues of Hereticks (as we ſee they did) their accounts differ from the Precedents they ought to have followed, that is the cenſures Apoſtolicall, and therefore are no ſafe Precedents for us; and unleſs they took the liberty of uſing the word heresy in a lower ſenſe then the world now doth, ſince the Councils have been forward in pronouncing Anathema and took it only for a diſtinct ſenſe, and a diſſuading perſuaſion in matters of opinion and minute Articles, we cannot excuſe the perſons of the men: But if they intended the crime of heresy againſt thoſe opinions as they laid them down in their Catalogues, that crime (I ſay) which is a work of the fleſh, which excludes from the Kingdom of Heaven, all that I ſhall ſay againſt them, is, that the cauſleſs curſe ſhall return

empty,

empty, and no man is damned the ſooner, be-
 cauſe his enemy crys *ſeſe*, and they that
 were the Judges and Accuſers might err as
 well as the perſons accuſed, and might need
 as charitable conſtruction of their opinions and
 practices as the other. And of this we are
 ſure they had no warrant from any rule of
 Scripture or practice Apoſtolicall, for driving
 ſo furiously and haſtily in ſuch decreetory ſen-
 tences. But I am willing rather to believe
 their ſenſe of the word *heresy* was more gentle
 than with us it is, and for that they might have
 warrant from Scripture.

But by the way, I obſerve that although theſe
 Catalogues are a great inſtance to ſhew that
 they whoſe Age and Spirits were far diſtant
 from the Apoſtles, had alſo other judgments
 concerning Faith and Heresy, than the Apoſtles
 had, and the Ages Apoſtolicall; yet theſe Ca-
 talogues although they are reports of heresies
 in the ſecond and third Ages, are not to be
 put upon the account of thoſe Ages, nor to be
 reckoned as an inſtance of their judgment,
 which although it was in ſome degrees more
 culpable than that of their Predeceſſors, yet in
 reſpect of the following Ages it was innocent
 and modeſt. But theſe Catalogues I ſpeak of,
 were ſet down according to the ſenſe of the
 then preſent ages, in which as they in all proba-
 bility did differ from the apprehenſions of the
 former Centuries, ſo it is certain, there were
 differing learnings, other fancies, divers re-
 ſentments and judgments of men depend-
 ing upon circumſtances which the firſt Ages
 knew, and the following Ages did not; and
 therefore the Catalogues were drawn with
 ſome truth, but leſs certainty, as appears in their

Numb. 278

differing about the Authors of ſome heresies ſeveral opinions imputed to the ſame, and ſome put in the roll of Hereticks by one, which the other left out; which to me is an Argument that the Collectors were determin'd, not by the ſentences and ſentences of the three firſt Ages, but by themſelves, and ſome circumſtances about them, which to reckon for Hereticks, which not. And that they themſelves were the prime Judges, or perhaps ſome in their own Age together with them; but there was not any ſufficient external judicatory competent to declare heresy that by any publick or ſufficient ſentence or acts of Council had furniſhed them with warrant for their Catalogues. And therefore they are no Arguments ſufficient that the firſt Ages of the Church, which certainly were the beſt, did much recoiled from that which I ſhewed to be the ſenſe of the Scripture, and the practice of the Apoſtles; they all contented themſelves with the Apoſtles Creed as the rule of the Faith; and therefore were not forward to judge of heresy, but by analogy to their rule of Faith: And thoſe Catalogues made after theſe Ages are not ſufficient Arguments that they did otherwiſe; but rather of the weakneſs of ſome perſons, or of the ſpirit and genius of the Age in which the Compilers lived, in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the name of heresies, might grow to be a deſign to ſerve ends, and to promote intereſts, as often as an act of zeal and juſt indignation againſt evil perſons deſtroyers of the Faith and corrupters of manners.

Numb. 22. For whatever private mens opinions were yet till the *Nicene* Council, the rule of Faith was intire in the Apoſtles Creed, and provided that retained that, eaſily they broke not the unity of Faith.

Faith, however differing opinions might poſſibly commence in ſuch things in which a liberty were better ſuffered than prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the Queſtion between *St. Cyprian of Carthage*, and *Stephen Biſhop of Rome*, in which one inſtance it is eaſie to ſee what was lawful and ſafe for a wiſe and good man, and yet how others began even then to be abuſed by that temptation, which ſince hath invaded all Chriſtendom. *St. Cyprian* re-baptized Hereticks and thought he was bound ſo to do; calls a Synod in *Africk* as being Metropolitan, and confirms his opinion by the conſent of his Suffragans and Brethren, but ſtill with ſo much modeſty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judg'd him not, but gave him that liberty that he deſired himſelf; *Stephen Biſhop of Rome* grows angry, Excommunicates the Biſhops of *Aſia* and *Africa*, that in divers Synods had conſented to rebaptization, and without peace, and without charity, condemns them for Hereticks. Indeed here was the rareſt mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have obſerved. Here was error of opinion with much modeſty and ſweetneſs of temper on one ſide; and on the other, an over-active and impetuous zeal to atteſt a truth, it uſes not to be ſo, for error uſually is ſupported with confidence, and truth ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanc'd by indifferency. But that it might appear that the error was not the ſin but the uncharitableneſs, *Stephen* was accounted a zealous and furious perſon, and *St. * Cyprian* though deceived, yet a very good man, and of great ſanctity. For although every error is to be oppoſed, yet according to the variety of errors, ſo is there variety of proceedings.

• Vid. S. Aug.
l. 2. c. 6. de bapt.
tiſ. contra De-
nat.

ceedings. If it be againſt Faith, that is, a deſtruction of any part of the foundation, it ſhall with zeal to be reſiſted, and we have for it an Apoſtolic warrant, *contend earneſtly for Faith*; but then as theſe things recede farther from the foundation, our certainty is the leſs, and their neceſſity not ſo much, and therefore it were very fit, that our confidence ſhould be according to our evidence, and our zeal according to our confidence, and our confidence ſhould then be the Rule of our Communion; and the lightneſs of an Article ſhould be conſidered with the weight of a precept of charity. And therefore, there are ſome errors to be reprov'd, rather by a private friend than by publick cenſure, and the perſons of the men not avoided but admoniſhed, and their Doctrines rejected, not their Communion; few opinions are of that malignity which are to be rejected with the ſame exterminating ſpirit, and confidence of averſation, with which the firſt Teachers of Chriſtianity condemn'd *Ebion, Manes* and *Cerinthus*; and in the condemnation of Hereticks, the perſonal iniquity is more conſiderable than the obliquity of the doctrine, not for the rejection of the Article, but for cenſuring the perſons; and therefore it is the piety of the man that excuſed *St. Cyprian*, which is a certain Argument that it is not the opinion, but the impiety that condemns and makes the Heretick. And this was it which *Vincentius Lirinienſis* ſaid in this very caſe of *St. Cyprian*, *Unius & ejusdem opinionis (mirum videri poteſt) judicamus aucthores Catholicos, & ſequaces hereticos. Excusamus Magiſtros, & condemnamus Scholaſticos. Qui ſcripſerunt libros ſunt heredes Cæli, quorum librorum deſenſores detruduntur ad infernum.* Which ſaying

Adv. hereſ. c. ii.

we confront againſt the ſaying of *Salvian* condemning the firſt Authors of the *Arrian* Sect, and acquitting the Followers, we are taught by theſe two wiſe Men, that an error is not it that ſends a Man to Hell, but he that begins the heresy, and is the Author of the Sect, is the Man mark'd out to ruin; and his Followers ſcap'd, when the *Hereſiarch* commenc'd the error upon Pride and Ambition, and his Followers went after him in ſimplicity of their heart; and ſo it was moſt commonly: but on the contrary, when the firſt Man in the opinion was honeſtly and invincibly deceived, as *St. Cyprian* was, and that his Scholars to maintain their credit, for their ends, maintained the opinion, not for the excellency of the Reason perſuading, but for the benefit and accruments, or peeviſhneſs, as did the *Donatiſts*, *qui de Cypriani authoritate ſibi carnaliter blandiuntur*, as *St. Auſtin* ſaid of them; then the Scholars are the Hereticks, and the Maſter is a Catholick. For his error is not the heresy formally, and an erring Perſon may be a Catholick. A wicked Perſon in his error becomes Heretick, when the good Man in the ſame error ſhall have all the rewards of Faith. For whatever an ill Man believes, if he therefore believe it becauſe it ſerves his own ends, be his belief true or falſe, the Man hath an heretical Mind, for to ſerve his own ends, his Mind is prepared to believe a Lye. But a good Man that believes what according to his light, and upon the uſe of his moral induſtry he thinks true, whether he hits upon the right or no, becauſe he hath a mind deſirous of Truth, and prepared to believe every Truth, is therefore acceptable to God, becauſe nothing hindred him from it, but what he could not help, his
miſery

misery and his weakness, which being imperfections meerly natural, which God never punishes, he stands fair for a blessing of his mortality, which God always accepts. So that if *Stephen* had followed the example of God Almighty, or retained but the same peaceable spirit which his Brother of *Carthage* did, he might with more advantage to truth, and reputation both of wisdom and piety have done his duty in attesting what he believ'd to be true; for we are as much bound to be zealous pursuers of Peace as earnest contenders for the Faith. I am sure more earnest we ought to be for the Peace of the Church, than for an Article which is not of the Faith, as this Question of re-baptization was not; for *St Cyprian* died in belief against it and yet was a Catholick, and a Martyr for the Christian Faith.

Numb. 23. The sum is this, *St. Cyprian* did right in a wrong cause (as it hath been since judged) and *Stephen* did ill in a good cause; as far then as Piety and Charity is to be preferr'd before a true opinion, so far is *St. Cyprian's* practice a better precedent for us, and an example of primitive sanctity, than the zeal and indiscretion of *Stephen*: *St. Cyprian* had not learn'd to forbid to any one a liberty of Prophesying or Interpretation, if he transgressed not the foundation of Faith and the Creed of the Apostles.

Numb. 24. Well thus it was, and thus it ought to be in the first Ages, the Faith of Christendom rested still upon the same Foundation, and the judgments of heresies were accordingly, or were amiss; but the first great violation of this truth was, when General Councils came in, and the Symbols were enlarged, and new Articles were made as much of necessity to be believed as the Creed

of the Apoſtles, and damnation threat-
ed to them that did diſſent, and at laſt the
needs multiplyed in number, and in Arti-
cles, and the liberty of propheſying began to
be ſomething reſtrained.

And this was of ſo much the more force and *Numb. 25.*
efficacy, becauſe it began upon great reaſon,
and in the firſt inſtance, with ſucceſs good e-
nough. For I am much pleaſed with the en-
larging of the Creed, which the Council of
Nice made, becauſe they enlarged it to my
uſe; but I am not ſure that others are ſatis-
fied with it; While we look upon the Article
they did determine, we ſee all things well e-
xplained; but there are ſome wiſe perſonages con-
ſider it in all circumſtances, and think the
Church had been more happy if ſhe had not
been in ſome ſenſe conſtrained to alter the ſim-
plicity of her faith, and make it more curious
and articulate, ſo much that he had need be a
ſubtle Man to underſtand the very words of the
new determinations.

For the firſt *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, *Numb. 26.*
in the preſence of his Clergy, entreats ſome-
what more curiouſly of the ſecret of the myſte-
rious Trinity and Unity, ſo curiouſly, that *A-* *Socra. lib 1.*
rianus (who was a Sophiſter too ſubtle as it after- *c. 8.*
ward appear'd) miſunderſtood him, and
thought he intended to bring in the hereſy of
Sabellius. For while he taught the Unity of
the Trinity, either he did it ſo inartificially, or
ſo intricately, that *Arianus* thought he did not
distinguish the perſons, when the Biſhop inten-
ded only the unity of nature. Againſt this *A-*
rianus furioſly drives, and to confute *Sabellius*,
and in him (as he thought) the Biſhop, distin-
guishes the natures too, and ſo to ſecure the
Article

Lib. I. c. 6.

Cap. 7.

Article of the Trinity, deſtroys the Unity. was the firſt time the Queſtion was diſputed in the World, and in ſuch myſterious niceties poſſibly every wiſe Man may underſtand ſome thing, but few can underſtand all, and therefore ſuſpect what they underſtand not, and are furiously zealous for that part of it which they do perceive. Well, it happened in theſe ſeveral ways in ſuch caſes, in things men underſtand not they are moſt impetuous; and becauſe ſuſpicion is a thing infinite in degrees, for it hath nothing to determine it, a ſuſpicious perſon is ever moſt violent; for his fears are worſe than the thing feared, becauſe the thing is limited, but his fears are not; ſo that upon this grew contentions on both ſides, and tumults, rayling and reviling each other; and then the Laity were drawn into parts, and the *Meletians* abetted the wrong part, and the right part fearing to be overborn, did any thing that was next at hand to ſecure it ſelf. Now then they that lived in that Age, that underſtood the Men, that ſaw how quiet the Church was before this ſtir, how miſerably rent now, what little benefit from the Queſtion, what ſchiſm about it, gave other cenſures of the buſineſs, than we ſince have done, who only look upon the Article determin'd with truth and approbation of the Church generally, ſince that time. But the Epistle of *Conſtantine* to *Alexander* and *Arius*, tells the truth, and chides them both for commencing the Queſtion, *Alexander* for broaching it, *Arius* for taking it up; and although this be true, that it had been better for the Church it never had begun, yet being begun, what is to be done in it? of this alſo in that admirable Epistle, we have the Emperours judgement.

(I ſup-

I ſuppoſe not without the adviſe and privy of *Hofius* Biſhop of *Corduba*, whom the Emperour lov'd and truſted much, and imployed in the delivery of the Letters.) " For firſt he calls it a certain vain piece of a Queſtion, ill begun and more unadviſedly publiſhed, a Queſtion which no Law or Eccleſiaſtical Canon deſigneth, a fruitleſs contention, the product of idle brains, a matter ſo nice, ſo obſcure, ſo intricate that it was neither to be explicated by the Clergy, nor underſtood by the People, a diſpute of words, a doctrine inexplicable, but moſt dangerous when taught leaſt it introduce diſcord or blaſphemy; and therefore, the Objector was raſh, and the Answerer unadviſed; for it concerned not the ſubſtance of Faith, or the worſhip of God, nor any chief Commandment of Scripture, and therefore, why ſhould it be the matter of diſcord? For though the matter be grave; yet becauſe neither neceſſary, nor explicable, the contention is trifling and toyiſh. And therefore, as the Philoſophers of the ſame Sect, though differing in explication of an opinion, yet more love for the unity of their profeſſion, than diſagree for the difference of Opinion; So ſhould Chriſtians believing in the ſame God, retaining the ſame Faith, having the ſame hopes oppoſed by the ſame Enemies, not fall at variance upon ſuch diſputes, conſidering our underſtandings are not all alike; and therefore, neither can our opinions in ſuch myſterious Articles; ſo the matter being of no great importance, but vain, and a toy in reſpect of the excellent bleſſings of Peace and Charity, it were good that *Alexander* and *Arius* ſhould leave contending, keep their opinions to themſelves, ask each other
" forgive-

“forgiveness, and give mutual toleration. This is the substance of *Constantine’s* Letter, and contains in it much reason, if he did not undervalue the Question; but it seems it was not thus thought a Question of Faith, but of nicety of dispute; they both did believe one God, and the Holy Trinity. Now then that he afterward called the *Nicene* Council, it was upon occasion of the vileness of the men of the *Arian* party, their eternal discord and pertinacious wrangling, and to bring peace into the Church; this was the necessity; and in order to it was the determination of the Article. But for the Article itself, the Letter declares what opinion he had of that, and this Letter was by *Socrates* called a *wonderful exhortation, full of grace and sober counsels*; and such as *Hosius* himself, who was the messenger, pressed with all earnestness, with all the Skill and Authority he had.

Numb. 27. I know the opinion the World had of the Article afterward is quite differing from the censure given of it before; and therefore they have put it into the Creed (I suppose) to bring the World to unity, and to prevent Sedition in this Question, and the accidental Blasphemies which were occasioned by their curious talking of such secret mysteries, and by their illiterate resolutions. But although the Article was determin’d with an excellent spirit, and we are with much reason profess to believe it; yet this is another consideration, whether or no it might not have been better determin’d, if with more simplicity; and another yet, whether or no since many of the Bishops who did believe this thing, yet did not like the nicety and curiosity of expressing it, it had not been more agreeable to the practise of the Apostles to have made a deter-

determination of the Article by way of Exposition of the Apostles Creed, and to have left this in a rescript, for record to all posterity, and not to have enlarged the Creed with it; for since it was an Explication of an Article of the Creed of the Apostles, as Sermons are of places of Scripture, it was thought by some, that Scripture might with good profit, and great truth be expounded, and yet the expositions not put into the Canon, or go for Scripture, but that left still in the naked Original simplicity, and so much the rather since that explication was farther from the foundation, and though most certainly true, yet not penn'd by so infallible a Spirit, as was that of the Apostles; and therefore not with so much evidence, as certainty. And if they had pleased, they might have made use of an admirable precedent to this and many other great and good purposes, no less than of the blessed Apostles, whose Symbol they might have imitated, with as much simplicity as they did the Expressions of Scripture, when they first compos'd it. For it is most considerable, that although in reason, every clause in the Creed should be clear, and so inopportune and unapt to variety of interpretation, that there might be no place left for several senses or variety of Expositions: yet when they thought fit to insert some mysteries into the Creed, which in Scripture were expressed in so mysterious Words, that the last and most explicate sense would still be latent, yet they who (if ever any did) understood all the senses and secrets of it, thought it not fit to use any words but the words of Scripture, particularly in the Articles of [Christs descending into Hell, and sitting at the right hand of God] to shew us, that those

Creeds

Creeds are beſt which keep the very words of Scripture; and that Faith is beſt which has the greateſt ſimplicity, and that it is better in caſes humbly to ſubmit, than curiouſly to enquire and pry into the myſtery under the cloud, and to hazard our Faith by improving our knowledge: If the *Nicene* Fathers had done ſo too, poſſibly the Church would never have repented it.

Numb. 28. And indeed the experience, the Church afterwards, ſhewed that the Biſhops and Priests were not ſatisfied in all circumſtances, nor the ſchiſm appeaſed nor the perſons agreed, nor the Canons accepted, nor the Article underſtood nor any thing right, but when they were overborn with Authority, which Authority when the ſcales turned, did the ſame ſervice and promotion to the contrary.

Numb. 29. But it is conſiderable, that it was not the Article or the thing it ſelf that troubled the diſagreeing perſons, but the manner of repreſenting it. For the five Diſſenters, *Eusebium* of *Nicomedia*, *Theognis*, *Maris*, *Theonas*, and *Secundus*, believed Chriſt to be very God of very God, but the claufe of *ὁμοῦς* they derided as being perſuaded by their Logick, that he was neither of the ſubſtance of the Father, by diviſion as a piece of a lump, nor derivation as Children from their Parents, nor by production as buds from Trees, and no body could tell them any other way at that time, and that made the fire to burn ſtill. And that was it I ſaid; if the Article had been with more ſimplicity, and leſs nicety determin'd, Charity would have gain'd more, and Faith would have loſt nothing. And we ſhall find the wiſeſt of them all, for ſo *Eusebius Pamphilus* was eſteem'd, published a

Creed

Creed or Confession in the Synod, and though he and all the rest believed that great mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*, Vide Sozomen. lib. 2. c. 18. yet he was not fully satisfied, nor so soon of the clause of *one substance*, till he had done a little violence to his own understanding; for even when he had subscribed to the clause of *one substance*, he does it with a protestation, that heretofore he never had been acquainted, nor accustomed himself to such speeches. And the sense of the word was either so ambiguous, or their meaning so uncertain that *Andreas* Socrat. lib. 12 cap. 26. *Tricinus* does with some probability dispute that the Nicene Fathers by *ὁμοούσιον*, did mean *Patri similitudinem, non essentie unitatem*, *Sylva* 4. c. 1. And it was so well understood by persons disinterested, that when *Arius* and *Eunomius* had confessed Christ to be *Deus verbum*, without inserting the clause of *one substance*, the Emperor by his Letter approved of his faith, and restored him to his Country and Office, and the Communion of the Church. And a long time after although the Article was believed with * nicety enough, yet when they added more words still to the mystery, and brought in the word *ὑπόστασις*, saying there were three hypostases in the holy Trinity; it was so long before it could be understood, that it was believed therefore, because they would not oppose their Superiors, or disturb the peace of the Church, in things which they thought could not be understood: insomuch that *St. Hierom* writ to *Damasus*, in these words: *Discerne si placet obsecro, non timebo tres hypostases dicere si jubetis; and again, Obtestor beatitudinem tuam per Crucifixum, mundi salutem, per ὁμοούσιον Trinitatem, ut mihi Epistolis tuis, sive*
F *tacendarum*

* Non imprudenter dixit, qui curiosa explicationi hujus mysterii dictum Aristonis Philosophi applicuit. Holleborus niger si crassius sumatur purgat & sanat. Quum autem teritur & comminuitur, suffocat.

tacendarum ſive dicendarum hypoftaſeôn detur auctoritas.

Numb. 30. But without all Queſtion, the Fathers determin'd the Queſtion with much truth, though we cannot ſay, the Arguments upon which they built their Decrees, were ſo good as the concluſion it ſelf was certain; But that which in this caſe is conſiderable, is whether or no they did well in putting a curſe to the foot of their Decree, and the Decree it ſelf into a Symbol, as if it had been of the ſame neceſſity. For the curſe, *Eusebius Pamphilus* could hardly find in his heart to ſubſcribe, at laſt he did, but with this claufe that he ſubſcribed it, becauſe the form of curſe did only forbid men to acquaint themſelves with foreign ſpeeches and unwritten languages, whereby confuſion and diſcord is brought into the Church. So that it was not ſo much a magiſterial high aſſertion of the Article, as an endeavour to ſecure the peace of the Church. And to the ſame purpoſe for ought I know, the Fathers compoſed a Form of Confession, not as a preſcript Rule of Faith to build the hopes of our ſalvation on, but as a *teſſera* of that Communion which by public Authority was therefore eſtabliſhed upon thoſe Articles becauſe the Articles were not though not of prime neceſſity, and becauſe the unity of confeſſion was judged, as things conſidered, the beſt preſerver of the unity of minds.

Numb. 31. But I ſhall obſerve this, that although the *Nicene* Fathers in that caſe at that time, in that conjuncture of circumſtances did not (and yet their approbation is made by all Ages *ex poſt facto*;) yet if this precedent has been followed by all Councils (and certainly the

had equal power, if they had thought it equally reasonable) and that they had put all their Decrees into the Creed, as ſome have done ſince, to what a volume had the Creed by this time ſwell'd? and all the houſe had run into foundation, nothing left for ſuper-ſtructures. But that they did not, it appears, 1. that ſince they thought all their Decrees true, yet they did not think them all neceſſary, at leaſt not in that degree, and that they publiſhed ſuch Decrees, they did it *declarando*, not *imperando*, as Doctors in their Chairs, not maſters of other mens faith and conſciences. 2. And yet there is ſome more modeſty, or warineſs or neceſſity (what ſhall I call it?) than this comes to: for why are not all controverſies determined? but even when General Aſſemblies of Prelates have been, ſome controverſies that have been very vexatious, have been pretermitted, and others of leſs conſequence have been determined: Why did never any General Council condemn in expreſs ſentence the *Pelagian* heresy, that great peſt, that ſubtle infection of Chriſtendom? and yet divers General Councils did aſſemble while the heresy was in the world. Both theſe caſes in ſeveral degrees leave men in their liberty of believing and propheſying. The latter proclaims that all controverſies cannot be determin'd to ſufficient purpoſes, and the firſt declares that thoſe that are, are not all of them matters of Faith, and themſelves are not ſo ſecure, but they may be deceived; and therefore poſſibly it were better if they were let alone; for if the latter leaves them divided in their opinions, yet their Communion, and therefore probably their charities are not divided; but the former divides their

1.

2.

Communion, and hinders their intereſt: and yet for ought is certain, the accuſed perſon is the better Catholick. And yet after all this, it is not ſafety enough to ſay, let the Council or Prelates determine Articles warily, ſeldom, with great caution, and with much ſweetneſs and modeſty: For though this be better than to do it raſhly, frequently and furiously yet if we once tranſgreſs the bounds ſet us by the Apoſtles in their Creed, and not only preach other truths, but determine them *pro tribunali* as well as *pro cathedra*, although there be no error in the ſubject-matter (as in *Nice* there was none) yet if the next Age ſay they will determine another Article with as much care and caution, and pretend a great neceſſity, there is no hindring them but by giving reaſons againſt it; and ſo like enough they might have done againſt the decreeing the Article at *Nice*; yet that is not ſufficient; for ſince the Authority of the *Nicean* Council hath grown to the height of a mountainous prejudice againſt him that ſhould ſay it was ill done, the ſame reaſon and the ſame neceſſity may be pretended by any Age and in any Council, and they think themſelves warranted by the great precedent at *Nice* to proceed as peremptorily as they did; but then if any other Aſſembly of learned men might poſſibly be deceived, were it not better they ſhould ſpare the labour, than that they ſhould with ſo great pomp and ſolemnities engage mens perſuaſions, and determine an Article which after Ages muſt reſcind; for therefore moſt certainly in their own Age, the point with ſafety of Faith and ſalvation, might have been diſputed and diſbelieved: And that many

mens faiths have been tyed up by Acts and Decrees of Councils for those Articles in which the next Age did see a liberty had better been preserved, because an error was determined, we shall afterward receive a more certain account.

And therefore the Council of *Nice* did well, *Numb. 32.* and *Constantinople* did well, so did *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; but it is because the Articles were truly determined (for that is part of my belief;) but who is sure it should be so beforehand, and whether the points there determined were necessary or no to be believed or to be determin'd, if peace had been concern'd in it through the faction and division of the parties, I suppose the judgment of *Constantine* the Emperour and the famous *Hosius* of *Corduba* is sufficient to instruct us, whose authority I rather urge than reasons, because it is a prejudice and not a reason I am to contend against.

So that such determinations and publishing *Numb. 33.* of Confessions with Authority of Prince and Bishop, are sometimes of very good use for the peace of the Church, and they are good also to determine the judgment of indifferent persons, whose reasons of either side, are not too great to weigh down the probability of that Authority: But for persons of confident and imperious understandings, they on whose side the determination is, are armed with a prejudice against the other, and with a weapon to affront them, but with no more to convince them; and they against whom the decision is, do the more readily betake themselves to the defensive, and are engaged upon contestation and publick enmities, for such Articles which either might safely have been unknown, or with

much charity diſputed. Therefore the *Nicene* Council, although it have the advantage of an acquir'd and preſcribing Authority, yet it muſt not become a precedent to others, leaſt the inconveniences of multiplying more Articles upon as great pretence of reaſon as then, make the act of the *Nicene* Fathers in ſtraitning Propheſying and enlarging the Creed, become accidentally an inconvenience. The firſt reſtraint, although if it had been complain'd of, might poſſibly have been better conſider'd of; yet the inconvenience is not viſible, till it comes by way of precedent to uſher in more. It is like an Arbitrary power, which although by the ſame reaſon it take ſix pence from the ſubject, it may take a hundred pound, and then a thouſand, and then all, yet ſo long as it is within the firſt bounds, the inconvenience is not ſo great; but when it comes to be a precedent or argument for more, then the firſt may juſtly be complain'd of, as having in it that reaſon in the principle which brought the inconvenience in the ſequel; and we have ſeen very ill confequents from innocent beginnings.

Numb. 34.

And the inconveniences which might poſſibly ariſe from this precedent, thoſe wiſe Perſonages alſo did fore-ſee: and therefore although they took liberty in *Nice*, to add ſome Articles, or at leaſt more explicitly to declare the firſt Creed, yet they then would have all the world to reſt upon that and go no farther, as believing that to be ſufficient. St. *Athanaſius* declares their opinion, ἢ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ παρὰ τῶν πατέρων καὶ τὰς θείας γραφὰς, ὁμολογηθεῖσα πίστις αὐτάρκης ἐστὶν τοῦ ἀνατροπῆς μὲν πάσης ἀσθενοῦς φύσεως ἢ τῆ ἀσθενείας ἐν Χριστῷ πίστεως. That Faith which thoſe Fathers there confeſſed was ſufficient

Epist. ad Epist.

ſufficient for the refutation of all impiety, and the eſtabliſhment of all Faith in Chriſt and true Religion. And therefore there was a famous Epistle written by *Zeno* the Emperour, ^{*Evag. l. 3. c*} called the *Εὐαγγελιον* or the Epistle of reconciliation, ^{14.} in which all disagreeing intereſts, are entreated to agree in the *Nicene* Symbol, and a promiſe made upon that condition to communicate with all other Sects, adding withall, that the Church ſhould never receive any other Symbol than that which was compoſed by the *Nicene* Fathers. And however *Honorius* was condemn'd for a *Monothelete*; yet in one of the Epistles which the ſixth Synod alledged againſt him, (*viz.* the ſecond) he gave them counſel that would have done the Church as much ſervice as the determination of the Article did; for he adviſed them not to be curious in their diſputings, nor dogmatical in their determinations about that Queſtion; and becauſe the Church was not uſed to diſpute in that Queſtion, it were better to preſerve the ſimplicity of Faith, than to enſnare mens conſciences by a new Article. And when the Emperour *Conſtantius* was by his Faction engaged in a contrary practice, the inconvenience and unreaſonableneſs was ſo great, that a prudent Heathen obſerved and noted it in this character of *Conſtantius*, *Christianam religionem absolutam & simplicem* [N. B.] *anili ſuperſtitione confudit. In quâ ſcrutandâ perplexiùs quam in componendâ gratiùs, excitavit diffidia quæ progrefſa fuſiùs aluit concertatione verborum dum ritum omnem ad ſuum trahere conatur arbitrium.*

And yet men are more lead by Example ^{*Numb. 85.*} than either by Reason or by Precept; for in the Council of *Conſtantinople* one Article *de novo &*

integro was added, viz. *I believe one Baptiſm for the remiſſion of ſins*; and then again they were ſo confident, that that Confeſſion of Faith was ſo abſolutely intire, and that no man ever after ſhould need to add any thing to the integrity of Faith, that the Fathers of the Council of *Ephesus* pronounced *Anathema* to all thoſe that ſhould add any thing to the Creed of *Conſtantinople*. And yet for all this, the Church of *Rome* in a Synod at *Gentilly* added the clauſe of *Filioque*, to the Article of the proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt, and what they have done ſince, all the world knows, *Exempla non conſiſtunt, ſed quamvis in tenuem recepta tramitem latiffimè evagandi ſibi faciunt poteſtatem*. All men were perſuaded that it was moſt reaſonable the limits of Faith ſhould be no more enlarged; but yet they enlarged it themſelves and bound others from doing it, like an intemperate Father, who becauſe he knows he does ill himſelf, enjoyns temperance to his Son, but continues to be intemperate himſelf.

Numb. 36. But now if I ſhould be queſtioned concerning the Symbol of *Athanaſius* (for we ſee the *Nicene* Symbol was the Father of many more ſome twelve or thirteen Symbols in the ſpace of a hundred years) I confeſs I cannot ſee that moderate ſentence and gentleneſs of charity in his Preface and Concluſion as there was in the *Nicene* Creed. Nothing there but damnation and periſhing everlaſtingly, unleſs the Article of the Trinity be believed, as it is there with curioſity and minute particularities explained. Indeed *Athanaſius* had been ſoundly vexed on one ſide, and much cryed up on the other; and therefore it is not ſo much wonder for him to be ſo decretory and ſevere in his cenſure; for nothing

nothing could more ascertain his friends to him, and dis-repute his enemies, than the belief of that damnatory Appendix; but that does not justify the thing. For the Articles themselves, I am most heartily persuaded of the truth of them, and yet I dare not say all that are not so, are irrevocably damn'd, because *citra hoc Sym-bolum*, the Faith of the Apostles Creed is intire, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, that is, he that believeth such a belief as is sufficient disposition to be baptized, that Faith with the Sacrament is sufficient for heaven. Now the Apostles Creed does one; why therefore do not both intitle us to the promise? Besides, if it were considered concerning *Athanasius's* Creed, how many people understand it not, how contrary to natural reason it seems, * how little the * Scripture says of those curiosities of Explication, and how Tradition was not clear on his side for the Article it self, much less for those forms and minutes (how himself is put to make an answer, and excuse for the Fathers speaking in favour of the *Arrians*, at least so seeming-ly, that the *Arrians* appeal'd to them for tryal, and the offer was declin'd) and after all this that the *Nicene* Creed it self went not so far, neither in Artic-les, nor Anathema nor Ex-plication, it had not been amiss if the final judgment had been left to Jesus Christ; for he is appointed Judge of all the World, and he shall Judge the people righteously, for he knows every truth, the degree of every necessity, and all excuses that do lessen, or take away the nature
or

* Vide Hofium
de author. S.
Scrip. l. 3. p.
53. & Gordon.
Hunlaum.
Tom. 1. con-
trou. 1. de ver-
bo Dei, cap. 19.

† Vide Gretser. & Tanner. in colog.
Ratisbon. Eusebium fuisse Arianum
ait Perron. lib. 3. cap. 2. contra le
Roy Jaques. Idem. ait Originem ne-
gasse Divinitatem filii. & Spir. S.
l. 2. c. 7. de Euchar. contra Du-
plessis. idem cap. 5. observ. 4. ait.
Irenaeum talia dixisse qua qui hodie
diceret, pro Arriano reputaretur.
vide etiam Fisher. in resp. ad 9. Quast.
Jacobi Reg. & Epiphan. in hares. 65.

2 Pet. 2. 1.

D. Tho. 22.^a
 9. 1. artic. 1. ad
 3477.

or malice of a crime; all which I think *Athanaſius* though a very good man, did not know ſo well as to warrant ſuch a ſentence. And put caſe the hereſy there condemn'd be damnable, (as it is damnable enough) yet a man may maintain an opinion that is in it ſelf damnable, and yet he not knowing it ſo, and being invincibly lead into it may go to heaven; his opinion ſhall burn, and himſelf be ſaved. But however, I find no opinions in Scripture call'd damnable, but what are iniquitous in *materia practica*, or directly deſtructive of the Faith or the body of Chriſtianity ſuch of which *St. Peter* ſpeaks [*bringing in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord who bought them, theſe are the falſe Prophets who of covetouſneſs make merchandice of you through cozening words.*] Such as theſe are true hereſies, and ſuch as theſe are certainly damnable. But becauſe there are no degrees either of truth or falſhood, every true propoſition being alike true; that an error is more or leſs damnable, is not told us in Scripture but is determin'd by the man and his manner by circumſtance and accidents; and therefore the cenſure in the Preface and end, are Arguments of his zeal and ſtrength of his perſuafion; but they are extrinſecal and accidental to the Articles, and might as well have been ſpared. And indeed to me it ſeems very hard to put uncharitableneſs into the Creed, and to make it become as an Article of Faith though perhaps this very thing was no Faith in *Athanaſius* who if we may believe *Aquinas*, makes this manifeſtation of Faith, *non per modum ſymbole ſed per modum doctrinae*, that is, if I underſtand him right, not with a purpoſe to impoſe

pon others, but with confidence to declare his
 own belief; and that it was preſcrib'd to others
 as a Creed, was the act of the Biſhops of Rome;
 he ſaid, nay, poſſibly it was none of his: So
 ſaid the Patriarch of C. P. *Meletius* about one
 hundred and thirty years ſince, in his Epistle
 to *John Douza*, *Athanaſio falſo adſcriptum Sym-*
ſolum cum Pontificum Rom. appendice illâ adul-
teratum, luce lucidiùs conteſtamur. And it is
 more than probable that he ſaid true, becauſe
 this Creed was written originally in Latin,
 which in all reaſon *Athanaſius* did not, and it
 was tranſlated into Greek, it being apparent that
 the Latin Copy is but one, but the Greek is va-
 rious, there being three Editions or Tranſlations
 other, expreſſed by *Genebrard*, lib. 3. de *Trinit.*
 in this particular, who liſt, may better ſa-
 tisfy himſelf in a diſputation de *Symbolo Athanaſii*,
 printed at *Wertzburg* 1590 ſuppoſed to be writ-
 ten by *Serrarius* or *Clencherus*.

And yet I muſt obſerve that this Symbol of *Numb. 37.*
Athanaſius, and that other of *Nice*, offer not
 any new Articles; they only pretend to a
 further Explication of the Articles Apoſtolicall,
 which is a certain confirmation that they did
 believe more Articles to be of belief neceſſa-
 ry to ſalvation: if they intended theſe further
 explications to be as neceſſary as the dogmaticall
 articles of the Apoſtles Creed, I know not
 how to answer all that may be objected againſt
 it; but the advantage that I ſhall gather from
 it not proceeding to new matters, is laid
 out ready for me in the words of *Athanaſius*,
 ſaying of this Creed [*this is the Catholick Faith*]
 and if his authority be good, or his ſaying
 true, or he the Author, then no man can
 deny of any other Article, that it is a part of
 the

*Bulla Pii
quarti ſupra
ſerma iura-
menti profeſſi-
onis fidei, in
ſyn. Conc. Tri-
dent.*

the Catholick Faith, or that the Catholick Faith can be enlarged beyond the contents of the Symbol; and therefore it is a ſtrange boldneſs in the Church of Rome, firſt to add two new Articles, and then to add the Appendix of *Athanaſius* to the end of them, *This is the Catholick Faith, without which no man can be ſaved.*

Numb. 38. But ſo great an example of ſo excellent a man, hath been either miſtaken or followed with too much greedineſs, all the world is in factions, all damning one another, each party damn'd by all the reſt, and there is no agreeing in opinion from any man that is in the world with his own opinion, but damnation preſent to all that diſagree. A Ceremony and a Rite hath cauſed ſeveral Churches to Excommunicate each other, as in the matter of the Saturday Faſt and keeping Eaſter. But what the ſpirits of men are when they are exaſperated in a Queſtion and difference of Religion, as they call it, though the thing it ſelf may be moſt inconſiderable, is very evident in that requeſt of *Pope Innocent the Third*, deſiring of the Greeks (which is reaſonably a man would think) that they would not ſo much hate the Roman manner of confeſſing in unleavened bread, as to waſh and ſcrape, and pare the Altars after a Roman Priſt had conſecrated. Nothing more furious than this miſtaken zeal, and the actions of a ſcrupulous and abuſed conſcience. When men think every thing to be their Faith and their Religion, commonly they are ſo buſie in trifles and ſuch inſubſtantialties, that they neglect the greater things of the Law, charity, and compliances, and the gentleneſs of Chriſtian Communion; for this

the great principle of mischief, and yet is not more pernicious than unreasonable.

For I demand: Can any man say and justify *Numb. 39.*

that the Apostles did deny Communion to any man that believed the Apostles Creed, and w'd a good life? And dare any man tax that proceeding of remissness, and indifferency in Religion; And since our blessed Saviour promised Salvation to him that *believeth* (and the Apostles when they gave this word the greatest extent, enlarged it not beyond the borders of the Creed) how can any man warrant the condemning of any man to the flames of Hell that is ready to die in attestation of this Faith, who expounded and made explicite by the Apostles, and lives accordingly? And to this purpose it was excellently said by a wise and pious Prelate, St. Hilary, *Non per difficiles nos*

Deus ad beatam vitam questiones vocat, &c. In *L. 10. de Trin. ad finem.*

absoluto nobis & facili est eternitas; Jesum suscitatum à mortuis, per deum credere, & ipsum esse Dominum confiteri, &c. These are the Articles which we must believe, which are the sufficient and adequate object of that Faith which is required of us in order to Salvation. And therefore it was, that when the Bishops of Istria de-

serted the Communion of Pope Pelagius, in *Concil. tom. 4. Edit. Paris. p. 473.*

causa trium Capitulorum, he gives them an account of his Faith by recitation of the Creed, and by attesting the four General Councils, and is confident upon this that *de fidei firmitate nulla poterit esse questio vel suspicio generari*; let the Apostles Creed, especially so explicated, be but secured, and all Faith is secured; and yet that explication too, was less necessary than the Articles themselves; for the explication was but accidental, but the Articles even before the

the Explication were accounted a ſufficient
to the Kingdom of heaven.

Numb. 40.

And that there was ſecurity enough in
ſimple believing the firſt Articles, is very
tain amongſt them, and by their Principles
allow of an implicate faith to ſerve moſt perfectly
to the greateſt purpoſes; for if the Creed
contain in it the whole Faith, and that other
Articles were in it implicitly, (for ſuch is the
doctrine of the School, and particularly
*22^d. q. 1. a. 20.
cap.* *Aquinas*) then he that explicitly believes all the
Creed, does implicitly believe all the Articles
contain'd in it, and then it is better the im-
plication ſhould ſtill continue, than that by any ex-
plication (which is ſimply unneceſſary) the
Church ſhould be troubled with queſtions, and
uncertain determinations, and factions enkind-
led, and animosities ſet on foot, and menſons
endanger'd, who before were ſecur'd by the ex-
plicit belief of all that the Apoſtles requir'd
neceſſary, which belief alſo did ſecure them
all the reſt, becauſe it implied the belief of what
ſoever was virtually in the firſt Articles, if
belief ſhould by chance be neceſſary.

Numb. 41.

The ſumm of this diſcourſe is this, if we
an eſtimate of the nature of Faith from the
ſtates and promiſes Evangelical, and from
practice Apoſtolicall, the nature of Faith
its integrity conſiſts in ſuch propoſitions which
make the foundation of hope and charity,
which is ſufficient to make us to do honour
Chriſt and to obey him, and to encourage
in both; and this is compleated in the Apoſtles
Creed. And ſince contraries are of the ſame
extent, hereſy is to be judg'd by its propoſitions
and analogy to faith, and that is hereſy
which is againſt Faith. Now becauſe Faith

not only a precept of Doctrines, but of manners and holy life, whatſoever is either oppoſite to an Article of Creed, or teaches ill life, that's hereſy; but all thoſe propoſitions which are extrinſecal to theſe two conſiderations, be they true or be they falſe, make not hereſy, nor the man an Heretick; and therefore however he may be an erring perſon, yet he is to be uſed accordingly, pitied and inſtructed, not condemned or Excommunicated; And this is the reſult of the firſt ground, the conſideration of the nature of Faith and Hereſy.

S E C T. III.

Of the difficulty and uncertainty of Arguments from Scripture, in Questions not ſimply neceſſary, not literally determined.

GOD who diſpoſes of all things ſweetly and Numb. 1.
 according to the nature and capacity of things and perſons, had made thoſe only neceſſary, which he had taken care ſhould be ſufficiently propounded to all perſons of whom he required the explicate belief. And therefore all the Articles of Faith are clearly and plainly ſet down in Scripture, and the Goſpel is not hid from *pereuntibus* ſaith St. Paul; *πάντες γὰρ ἀφ' ἑσθης ἀρχήσιν, καὶ χαλίας ἀπαύσης τροπῆς ἐν ταύταις ἐνεστόμεν.* Orthod. ſidei. lib. 4. c. 18.
 with *Damaſcen*, and that ſo manifeſtly that no man can be ignorant of the foundation of Faith without his own apparent fault. And this is acknowledged by all wiſe and good men, and is evident, beſides the reaſonableneſs of the

* *Super Pſal.*
 88. & *de util.*
cred. c. 6.
 † *Super Iſa-*
 c. 19. & *in*
Pſal. 86.
 † *Homil. 3. in*
Theſſ. Ep. 2.
 † *Serm. de*
confess.
 * *Miſcel. 2. l. 1.*
tit. 46.
 † *In Gen. ap.*
Struch. p. 87.
 * *C. 6.*
 † *Ad Anti-*
oc h. l. 2. p. 918.
 † *Par. 1. q. 1.*
art. 9.

the thing, in the testimonies of S. S. * *Auſtin*
 † *Hierom*, ‖ *Chryſoſtom*, † *Fulgentius*, * *Hug*
 † *Sancto Victore*, ‖ *Theodore*, * *Lactantius*, † *The*
 † *ophilus Antiochenus*, ‖ *Aquinas*, and the latter
 School-men. And God hath done more; for
 many things which are only profitable, and
 alſo ſet down ſo plainly, that (as St. *Anſtin* ſays)
nemo inde haurire non poſſit, ſi modò ad hauriend
devotè ac piè accedat (ubi ſupra de util. cred. c. 6.)
 but of ſuch things there is no Queſtion commencing
 in Chriſtendom, and if there were, it cannot be
 be a crime and humane intereſt, that are the Authors
 thors of ſuch diſputes, and therefore theſe cannot
 not be ſimple errors, but always hereſies, becauſe
 cauſe the principle of them is a perſonal ſin.
 But beſides theſe things which are ſo plainly
 ſet down, ſome for doctrine as St. *Paul* ſays
 that is, for Articles and foundation of Faith, ſome
 ſome for inſtruction, ſome for reproof, ſome for com-
 for comfort, that is, in matters practical and ſpecu-
 ſpeculative of ſeveral tempers and conſtitutions, there
 there are innumerable places containing in them the
 great myſteries, but yet either ſo enwrapped in
 with a cloud, or ſo darkned with umbrages, or ſo
 heighthened with expreſſions, or ſo covered with
 with allegories and garments of Rhetorick, that ſome
 profound in the matter, or ſo altered or made ſo
 intricate in the manner, in the cloathing and in
 the dreſſing, that God may ſeem to have leſſened
 them as tryals of our induſtry, and Arguments of
 of our imperfections, and incentives to our
 longings after heaven, and the cleareſt revelations
 tions of eternity, and as occasions and opportunities
 nities of our mutual charity and toleration towards
 each other, and humility in our ſelves, rather than
 than the repositories of Faith and furniture of
 Creeds, and Articles of belief.

Numb. 2.

For where-ever the word of God is kept, whether in Scripture alone, or also in Tradition, he that considers that the meaning of the one, and the truth or certainty of the other are things of great Question, will see a necessity in these things which are the subject matter of most of the Questions of Christendom) that men should hope to be excused by an implicate faith in God Almighty. For when there are in the Explications of Scripture so many Commentaries, so many senses and Interpretations, so many Volumes in all Ages, and all, like Mens Faces, exactly none like another, either this difference and inconvenience is absolutely no fault at all, or if it be, it is excusable, by a mind prepared to consent in that truth which God intended. And this I call an implicate Faith in God, which is certainly of as great excellency as an implicate Faith in any Man or company of Men. Because they who do require an implicate Faith in the Church for Articles less necessary, and excuse the want of explicate Faith in the implicate, do require an implicate Faith in the Church, because they believe that God hath required of them to have a mind prepared to believe whatever the Church says; which because it is a proposition of no absolute certainty, whosoever does in readiness of mind believe all that God spake, does also believe that sufficient-ly, if it be fitting to be believ'd, that is, if it be revealed, and if God hath said so; for he hath the same obedience of understanding in this as in the revelation. But because it is not so certain God hath appointed him in all things to believe that which is revealed the Church, and that it is certain we must rather believe God in all things, and yet neither know what either God hath revealed or the Church hath taught, it is better to take the certain than the uncertain,

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certain, to believe God rather than Men, eſpecially ſince if God hath bound us to believe Men, our abſolute ſubmiſſion to God does involve that, and there is no inconvenience in the World that way, but that we implicitly believe one Article more, viz. the Church's Authority or infallibility, which may well be pardoned, becauſe it ſecures our belief of all the reſt, and we are ſure if we believe all that God ſaid explicitly or implicitly, we alſo believe the Church implicitly in caſe we are bound to it; but we are not certain that if we believe any company of Men whom we call the Church, that we therefore obey God and believe what he hath ſaid. But however, if this will not help us, there is no help for us, but good fortune or abſolute predeſtination; for by choice and indoltry, no man can ſecure himſelf that in all the myſteries of Religion taught in Scripture he ſhall certainly underſtand and explicitly believe that ſenſe that God intended. For to this purpoſe there are many conſiderations.

Numb. 4.

1. There are ſo many thouſands of Copies that were writ by Perſons of ſeveral intereſts and perſuaſions, ſuch different underſtandings and tempers, ſuch diſtinct abilities and weakneſſes, that it is no wonder there is ſo great variety of readings both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. In the Old Teſtament, the Jews pretend that the Chriſtians have corrupted many places, on purpoſe to make Symphony between both the Teſtaments. On the other ſide the Chriſtians have had ſo much reaſon to ſuſpect the Jews, that when *Aquila* had tranſlated the Bible in their Schools, and had been taught by them, they rejected the Edition many of them, and ſome of them called it hereſy to follow.

And *Justin Martyr* juſtified it to *Tryphon*, that the Jews had defalk'd many ſayings from the Books of the old Prophets, and amongſt the reſt the inſtances in that of the *Pſalm*, *Dicite in nationibus quia Dominus regnavit à ligno*. The laſt words they have cut off, and prevail'd ſo far in it, that to this day none of our Bibles have it; but if they ought not to have it, then *Justin Martyr's* Bible had more in it than it ſhould have, for there it was; ſo that a fault there was either under or over. But however, there are infinite Readings in the New Teſtament (for in that I will inſtance) ſome whole Verſes in one that are not in another, and there was in ſome Copies of *St. Mark's* Goſpel in the laſt Chapter a whole Verſe, a Chapter it was anciently called, that is not found in our Bibles, as *St. Hierom. ad Hedibiam*, q. 3. notes. The words he repeats, *Lib. 2. contra Polygamos. Et illi ſatis faciebant diſſidentes, ſaeculum iſtud iniquitatis & incredulitatis ſubſtantia eſt, quæ non ſinit per immundos ſpiritus veram Dei apprehendi virtutem, idcirco jam nunc revela juſtitiam tuam*. Theſe words are thought by ſome, to favour of *Manichæiſme*, and for ought I can find were therefore rejected out of many Greek Copies, and at laſt out of the *Latin*. Now ſuppoſe that a *Manichee* in diſputation ſhould urge this place, having found it in his Bible, if a Catholick ſhould answer him by ſaying it is Apocryphal, and not found in divers Greek Copies, might not the *Manichee* ask how it came in, if it was not the word of God, and if it was, how came it out? and at laſt take the ſame liberty of rejecting any other Authority which ſhall be alledged againſt him; if he can find any Copy that may favour him, however that favour be procured; and did not the *Ebionites*

nites reject all the Epistles of St. Paul upon pretence he was an Enemy to the Law of Moses; indeed it was boldly and most unreasonable done; but if one title or one Chapter of S. Mark be called Apochryphal, for being suspected of *Manicheisme* it is a plea that will too much justify others in their taking and chusing what they list. But I will not urge it so far; but is not there as much reason for the fierce Lutherans to reject the Epistle of S. James for favouring justification by works, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, upon pretence that the sixth and tenth Chapters do favour *Novatianism*; especially since it was by some famous Churches at first accepted, even by the Church of Rome her self. The Parable of the Woman taken in Adultery which is now in Joh. 8. Eusebius says was not in any Gospel, but the Gospel *secundum Hebraeos* and S. Hieron makes it doubtful, and so does S. Chrysostom and Euthimius, the first not vouchsafing to explicate it in Homilies upon S. John the other affirming it not to be found in the earliest Copies. I shall not need to urge that there are some words so near in sound, that the Scribes might easily mistake: There is one famous one in *Epistola Parabolica*, which yet some Copies read *Prophetica*, the sense is very unlike though the words be near, and there needs some little interpretation to strain this latter reading to a good sense. That famous precept of S. Paul, that the Women must pray with a covering on their Head *capite obductas*, because of the Angels, hath brought into the Church an opinion that Angels are present in Churches, and are Spectators of our devotion and deportment. Such an opinion should meet with peevish opposites on one side and confident Hyperaspists on the other, might

poſſibly make a Sect, and here were a clear ground for the affirmative, and yet who knows but that it might have been a miſtake of the Transcribers to double the γ ? for if we read *ἀνὰ τὰς ἀγέλλας*, that the ſenſe be, Women in publick Aſſemblies muſt wear a Vail, by reaſon of Companies of the young Men there preſent, it would be no ill exchange for the loſs of a Letter, to make ſo probable ſo clear a Senſe of the place. But the inſtances in this kind, are too many, as appears in the variety of readings in ſeveral Copies proceeding from the negligence or ignorance of the Transcribers, or the malicious * endeavour of Hereticks, or the inſerting Marginal Notes into the Text, or the nearneſs of ſeveral words. Indeed there is ſo much evidence of this particular, that it hath encouraged the ſervants of the Vulgar Tranſlation (for ſo ſome are now a days) to prefer that Tranſlation before the Original; for although they have attempted that propoſition with very ill ſucceſs, yet that they could think it poſſible to be prov'd, is an Argument there is much variety and alterations in divers Texts; for if they were not, it were impudence to pretend a Tranſlation, and that none of the beſt, ſhould be better than the Original. But ſo it is that this variety of reading is not of ſlight conſideration; for although it be demonſtrably true, that all things neceſſary to Faith and good manners are preſerv'd from alteration and corruption, becauſe they are of things neceſſary, and they could not be neceſſary, unleſs they were delivered to us, God in his goodneſs and his juſtice having oblig'd himſelf to preſerve that which he hath bound us to obſerve and keep; in other things which God hath not oblig'd

* *Græci corruptum nomen Testamentum in Testamentum Tertul. l. 3. adv. Marcion. Euseb. l. 8. Hiſt. c. ult. Irenæ. l. 1. c. 29. allu. hæref. Baſil. l. 2. contr. Euxenium.*

himself so punctually to preserve, in these things since variety of reading is crept in, every reading takes away a degree of certainty from any proposition derivative from those places so read. And if some Copies (especially if they be publick and notable) omit a verse or title, every Argument from such a title or verse loses much of its strength and reputation; and we find it in a great instance. For when in probation of the mystery of the glorious Unity in Trinity, we alledge that saying of St. John [*there are three which bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one:*] the *Antitrinitarians* think they have answered the Argument by saying the *Syrian* Translation, and divers Greek Copies have not that verse in them, and therefore being of doubtful Authority, cannot conclude with certainty in a Question of Faith. And there is an instance on the Catholick part. For when the *Arians* urge the saying of our Saviour, [*No man knows that day and hour (viz. of Judgment) no not the Son, but the Father only,*] to prove that the Son knows not all things, and therefore cannot be God in the proper sense, St. *Ambrose* thinks he hath answered the Argument by saying, those words [*no not the Son*] was thrust into the Text by the fraud of the *Arians*. So that here we have one objection, which must first be cleared and made infallible, before we can be ascertain'd in any such Question as to call them Hereticks that dissent.

Numb. 3.

2. I consider that there are very many senses and designs of expounding Scripture, and when the Grammatical sense is found out, we are many times never the nearer; it is not that which was intended; for there is in very many Scriptures a double sense, a literal and a Spiritual

(for the Scripture is a Book written within and without (*Apoc. 5.*) And both theſe ſenſes are ſubdivided. For the literal ſenſe is either natural or figurative: And the Spiritual is ſometimes allegorical, ſometimes anagogical, nay, ſometimes there are divers literal ſenſes in the ſame ſentence, as St. *Auſtin* excellently proves in divers * places, and it appears in divers quotations in the New Teſtament, where the Apoſtles and Divine Writers bring the ſame Teſtimony to divers purpoſes; and particularly, St. *Paul's* making that ſaying of the *Pſalm*, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, to be an Argument of Chriſts Reſurrection, and a designation or ordination to his Pontificate is an inſtance very famous in his 1. and 5. Chapter to the *Hebrews*. But now there being ſuch variety of ſenſes in Scripture, and but few places ſo mark'd out, as not to be capable of divers ſenſes, if men will write Commentaries, as *Herod* made Orations *καὶ πολλὰς παρλασίας*, what inſallible *καὶ ἀνέκλιτον* will be left whereby to judge of the certain dogmatical reſolute ſenſe of ſuch places which have been the matter of Queſtion? For put caſe a Queſtion were commenc'd concerning the degrees of glory in heaven, as there is in the Schools a noted one, To ſhew an inequality of reward, Chriſt's Parable is brought of the reward of ten Cities, and of five according to the divers improvement of the Talents; this ſenſe is myſtical, and yet very probable, and underſtood by men for ought I know, to this very ſenſe. And the reſult of the Argument is made good by St. *Paul*, as one ſtar differeth from another in glory; ſo ſhall it be in the reſurrection of the dead. Now ſuppoſe another ſhould take the ſame liberty of Expounding

* *Lib. 12. confeſſ. cap. 26.*
Lib. 11. de Civit. Dei c. 9.
L. 3. de doctrina Chriſt. cap. 27.

another Parable to a myſtical ſenſe and Interpretation, as all Parables muſt be expounded; then the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and though differing in labour, yet having an equal reward, to any mans underſtanding may ſeem very ſtrongly to prove the contrary; and as if it were of purpoſe, and that it were the *primum intentum* of the Parable, the Lord of the Vineyard determin'd the point reſolutely upon the mutiny and repining of them that had born the burthen and heat of the day, *I will give unto this laſt even as to thee*; which to my ſenſe ſeems to determine the Queſtion of degrees. They that work but little, and they that work long, ſhall not be diſtinguiſhed in the reward though accidentally they were in the work; And if this opinion could but answer St. Paul's words it ſtands as fair, and perhaps fairer than any other. Now if we look well upon the words of St. Paul, we ſhall find he ſpeaks nothing at all of diverſity of degrees of glory in beatified bodies, but the differences of glory in bodies heavenly and earthly, *There are (ſays he) bodies earthly, and there are heavenly bodies: And one is the glory of the earthly, another the glory of the heavenly; one glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, &c.* So ſhall it be in the Reſurrection; *it is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption.* Plainly thus, our bodies in the Reſurrection ſhall differ, as much from our bodies here in the ſtate of corruption, as one Star differs from another. And now ſuppoſe a Sect ſhould be commenc'd upon this Queſtion, (upon which ever and vainer many have been) either ſide muſt reſolve to answer the others Arguments, whether they can or no, and to deny to each other the liberty of expounding the parable to ſuch a ſenſe,

and yet themſelves muſt uſe it or want an Argument. But men uſe to be unjuſt in their own caſes; And were it not better to leave each other to their liberty and ſeek to preſerve their own charity? For when the words are capable of a myſtical or a divers ſenſe, I know not why mens fancies or underſtandings ſhould be more bound to be like one another than their faces: And either in all ſuch places of ſcripture, a liberty muſt be indulg'd to every honeſt and peaceable wiſe man, or elſe all Argument from ſuch places muſt be wholly declin'd. Now although I inſtanc'd in a Queſtion, which by good fortune never came to open defiance, yet there have been Sects framed upon lighter grounds, more inconfiderable Queſtions, which have been diſputed on either ſide with Arguments leſs material and leſs pertinent. St. *Auſtin* laugh'd at the *Donatiſts*, for bringing that ſaying of the Spouſe in the *Canticles* to prove their Schiſm, *Indica mihi ubi paſcas, ubi cubes in meridie*. For from thence they concluded the reſidence of the Church was only in the South part of the world, only in *Africa*. It was but a weak way of Argument; yet the Fathers were free enough to uſe ſuch mediums, to prove myſteries of great concernment; but yet again, when they ſpeak either againſt an Adverſary, or with conſideration, they deny that ſuch myſtical ſenſes can ſufficiently confirm a Queſtion of Faith. But I ſhall inſtance in the great Queſtion of Rebaptization of Hereticks, which many Saints, and Martyrs, and Confessors, and divers Councils, and almoſt all *Aſia* and *Africa* did once believe and praſtiſe. Their grounds for the invalidity of the Baptiſm by a Heretick, were ſuch myſtical words as theſe, *Oleum peccatoris*

*Hieron. in
Matth. 13.*

peccatoris non impinguet caput meum, Pf. 140. And *Qui baptizatur à mortuo, quid proficit lavacrum ejus?* Ecclus. 34. And *ab aquâ alienâ abſtine*, Prov. 5. And *Deus peccatores non exaudiat*, Joh. 9. And *he that is not with me is againſt me*, Luk. 11. I am not ſure the other part had Arguments ſo good. For the great one of *una fides, unum baptiſma*, did not conclude it to their underſtandings who were of the other opinion, and men famous in their generations; for it was no Argument that they who had been baptized by John's Baptiſm ſhould not be baptized in the name of Jeſus, becauſe *unus Deus, unum baptiſma*; and as it is ſtill one Faith which a man confeſſeth ſeveral times, and one Sacrament of the Eucharift, though a man often communicates; ſo it might be one Baptiſm though often miniſtered. And the unity of Baptiſm might not be deriv'd from the unity of the miniſtration, but from the unity of the Religion into which they are baptized; though baptized a thouſand times, yet becauſe it was ſtill in the name of the holy Trinity, ſtill into the death of Chriſt, it might be *unum baptiſma*. Whether St. Cyprian, Firmilian, and their Collegues had this diſcourſe or no (I know not) I am ſure they might have had much better to have evacuated the force of that Argument, although I believe they had the wrong cauſe in hand. But this is it that I ſay, that when a Queſtion is ſo undetermin'd in Scripture, that the Arguments rely only upon ſuch myſtical places whence the beſt fancies can draw the greateſt variety, and ſuch which perhaps were never intended by the holy Ghoſt, it were good the rivers did not ſwell higher than the fountain, and the confidence higher than the Argument.

And evidence; for in this caſe there could not any thing be ſo certainly proved, as that the diſagreeing party ſhould deſerve to be condemn'd by a ſentence of Excommunication for diſbelieving it, and yet they were; which I wonder at ſo much the more, becauſe they (who as it was ſince judg'd) had the right cauſe, had not any ſufficient Argument from Scripture, not ſo much as ſuch myſtical Arguments, but did rely to the Tradition of the Church, in which alſo I ſhall afterward ſhew, they had nothing that was abſolutely certain.

3. I conſider that there are divers places of *Numb. 6.* Scripture containing in them myſteries and Questions of great concernment, and yet the fabrick and conſtitution is ſuch, that there is no certain mark to determine whether the ſenſe of them ſhould be literal or figurative; I ſpeak not here concerning extrinſecal means of determination, as traditive Interpretation, Councils, Fathers, Popes, and the like; I ſhall conſider them afterward in their ſeveral places; but here the ſubject-matter being concerning Scripture in its own capacity, I ſay there is nothing in the nature of the thing to determine the ſenſe and meaning, but it muſt be gotten out as it can; and that therefore it is unreaſonable, that what of it ſelf is ambiguous ſhould be underſtood in its own prime ſenſe and intention, under the pain of either a ſin or an Anathema; inſtance in that famous place from whence hath ſprung that Queſtion of Tranſubſtanti-
Hoc eſt corpus meum. The words are plain and clear, apt to be underſtood in the literal ſenſe and yet this ſenſe is ſo hard as it does violence to reaſon, and therefore it is the Queſtion whether or no it be not a figurative ſpeech.

ſpeech. But here what ſhall we have to determine it? What mean ſoever we take, and to what ſenſe ſoever you will expound it, you ſhall be put to give an account why you expounded other places of Scripture in the ſame caſe to quite contrary ſenſes. For if you expound it literally, then beſides that it ſeems to intrench upon the words of our bleſſed Saviour, *The words that I ſpeak they are Spirit and they are life*, that is, to be ſpiritually underſtood (and it is a miſerable thing to ſee what wretched ſhifts are uſed to reconcile the literal ſenſe to theſe words, and yet to diſtinguiſh it from the Capernaimitical fancy) but beſides this, why are not thoſe other ſayings of Chriſt expounded literally, *I am a Vine, I am the Door, I am a Rock*? Why do we flie to a figure in thoſe parallel words? *This is the Covenant which I make between me and you*; and yet that Covenant was but the ſign of the Covenant; and why do we flie to a figure in a precept, as well as in myſtery and a propoſition? *If thy right hand offend thee cut it off*; and yet we have figures enough to ſave a limb. If it be ſaid becauſe reaſon tells us theſe are not to be expounded according to the letter; This will be no plea for them who retain the literal expoſition of the other inſtance againſt all reaſon, againſt all Philoſophy, againſt all ſenſe, and againſt two or three ſciences. But if you expound theſe words figuratively, beſides that you are to conteſt againſt a world of prejudices, you give your ſelf the liberty, which if others will uſe when either they have a reaſon or a neceſſity ſo to do, they may perhaps turn all into Allegory, and ſo may evacuate any precept, and elude any Argument. Well, ſo it is that very wiſe men have expounded

things * Allegorically, when they ſhould have expounded them literally. So did the famous *Origen*, who as *St. Hierom* reports of him, turned *Paradife* ſo into an Allegory, that he took away quite the truth of the Story, and not only *Adam* was turned out of the Garden, but the Garden it ſelf out of *Paradife*. Others expound things literally when they ſhould underſtand them in Allegory; ſo did the Ancient *Papias* underſtand (*Apocal. 20.*) *Chriſts* Millenary reign upon earth, and ſo, depreſſed the hopes of *Chriſtianity* and their deſires to the longing and expectation of temporal pleaſures and ſatisfactions, and he was followed by *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenaus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and indeed the whole Church generally till *St. Auſtin* and *St. Hierom's* time who firſt of any whoſe works are extant did reprove the error. If ſuch great ſpirits be deceiv'd in finding out what kind of ſenſes be to be given to Scriptures, it may well be endur'd that we who ſit at their feet, may alſo tread in the ſteps of them whoſe feet could not always tread aright.

4. I conſider that there are ſome places of Scripture that have the ſelf ſame expreſſions, the ſame preceptive words, the ſame reaſon and account in all appearance, and yet either muſt be expounded to quite different ſenſes, or elſe we muſt renounce the Communion, and the charities of a great part of *Chriſtendom*. And yet there is abſolutely nothing in the thing or in its circumſtances, or in its adjuncts that can determine it to different purpoſes. I inſtance in thoſe great excluſive negatives for the neceſſity of both Sacraments. *Niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ, &c.* *Niſi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis, &c.* a non introibit in regnum cælorum for

Sic St. Hierom In adoleſcentia provocatus ardore & ſtudio ſcrupturarum allegorice interpretatus ſum. Abſurdam Propheſiam, cujus hiftoriam me ſciebam. De ſenſu Allegorico S. Script. dixit Baſilius. οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀληθεία ἡ ἀποκάλυψις καὶ ἡ προφητεία. I. 22 de Civit. Dei. c. 7. præfat. l. 19. in Iſai. & in c. 36. Ezek.

for both theſe. Now then the firſt is urg'd the abſolute indiſpenſible neceſſity of Baptiſm even in Infants, inſomuch that Infants go to Hell if (inculpably both on their own and their Parents part) they miſs of Baptiſm, that is the doctrine of the Church of Rome which they learnt from St. *Auſtin*, and others alſo do from hence baptize Infants, though with a leſs opinion of its abſolute neceſſity. And yet the ſame manner of precept in the ſame form of words, in the ſame manner of threatening, by an excluſive negative, ſhall not joyn us to communicate Infants, though damnation (at leaſt in form of words) be exactly and *per omnia* alike appendant to the neglect of holy Baptiſm and the venerable Eucharift. If [*nifi quis renatus*] ſhall conclude againſt the Anabaptiſt, for neceſſity of baptizing Infants (as ſure enough we ſay, it does) why ſhall not an equal [*nifi comederitis*] bring Infants to the holy Communion? The Primitive Church for ſome two whole Ages did follow their own principles, where-ever they lead them; and ſeeing that upon the ſame ground equal reſiſtance muſt follow, they did Communicate Infants as ſoon as they had baptized them. And why ſhould the Church of *Rome* ſhould not do ſo too, being ſhe expounds [*nifi comederitis*] of oral manducation. I cannot yet learn a Reaſon. And for others that expound it of a ſpiritual manducation, why they ſhall not allow the diſagreeing part the ſame liberty of expounding [*nifi quis renatus*] too, I by no means can underſtand. And in theſe caſes no external determiner can be pretended in answer. For whatſoever is extrinſecal to the words, as Councils, Tradition, Church Authority, and Fathers, either have ſaid

ſaid nothing at all, or have concluded by their practice contrary to the preſent opinion, as is plain in their communicating Infants by vertue of [*nifi comederitis.*]

5. I ſhall not need to urge the myſteriousneſs *Numb. 8.* of ſome points in Scripture, which *ex natura* are hard to be underſtood though very plainly repreſented. For there are ſome ſecrets *Theologia*, which are only to be underſtood by perſons very holy and ſpiritual, which are rather to be felt than diſcourſed of, and therefore if peradventure they be offered to publick conſideration, they will therefore be expoſed becauſe they run the ſame fortune with many other Queſtions, that is, not to be underſtood, and ſo much the rather becauſe of their underſtanding, that is, the feeling ſuch ſecrets of the Kingdom, are not the reſults of Logick and Philoſophy, or yet of publick revelation, but of the publick ſpirit privately working, and in no man is a duty, but in all that have it, is a reward, and is not neceſſary for all, but given to ſome, producing its operations, not regularly, but upon occaſions, perſonal neceſſities and new emergencies. Of this nature are the ſpirit of obſignation, belief of particular ſalvation, ſpecial influences and comforts coming from a ſenſe of the ſpirit of adoption, actual fervours and great complacencies in devotion, ſpiritual joys, which are little drawings aſide of the curtains of peace and eternity, and antepaſts of immortality. But the not underſtanding the perfect conſtitution and temper of theſe myſteries (and it is hard for any man ſo to underſtand, as to make others do ſo too that feel them not) becauſe that in many Queſtions of ſecret Theology, by being very apt and eaſy to be miſtaken, there

there is a neceſſity in forbearing one another and this conſideration would have been of good uſe in the Queſtion between *Soto* and *Catharinus* both for the preſervation of their charity and explication of the myſtery.

Numb. 9.

6. But here it will not be unſeaſonable to conſider, that all ſystems and principles of ſcience are expreſſed ſo that either by reaſon of the Univerſality of the terms and ſubject-matter or the infinite variety of humane underſtandings, and theſe peradventure ſwayed by intereſt or determin'd by things accidental and extrinſecal, they ſeem to divers men, nay to the ſame men upon divers occaſions to ſpeak things extremely diſparate and ſometimes contrary, but very often of great variety. And this very thing happens alſo in Scripture, that if it were not in *re ſacra & ſeriâ*, it were excellent ſport to obſerve how the ſame place of Scripture ſerves ſeveral turns upon occaſion, and they at that time believe the words ſound nothing elſe whereas in the liberty of their judgment and abſtracting from that occaſion, their Commentaries underſtand them wholly to a differing ſenſe. It is a wonder of what excellent uſe to the Church of *Rome*, is [*tibi dabo claves*:] it was ſpoken to *Peter* and none elſe (ſometimes) and therefore it concerns him and his Succeſſors only; the reſt are to derive from him. And yet if you Queſtion them for their Sacrament of Penance, and Prieſtly Abſolution, then *tibi dabo claves* comes in, and that was ſpoken to *St. Peter*, and in him to the whole College of the Apoſtles, and in them to the whole Hierarchy. If you queſtion why the Pope pretends to free ſouls from Purgatory, *tibi dabo claves* is his warrant; but if you tell him the Keys are only for binding

and loosing on Earth directly, and in Heaven
consequently; and that Purgatory is a part of
Hell, or rather neither Earth nor Heaven nor
Hell, and so the Keys seem to have nothing to
do with it, then his Commission is to be enlarg-
ed by a suppletory of reason and consequences,
and his Keys shall unlock this difficulty; for it
is *clavis scientiæ* as well as *authoritatis*. And
these Keys shall enable him to expound Scri-
ptures infallibly, to determine Questions, to
preside in Councils, to dictate to all the World
magisterially, to rule the Church, to dispense
with Oaths, to abrogate Laws: And if his Key
of Knowledge will not, the Key of Authority
shall, and *tibi dabo claves* shall answer for all.
We have an instance in the single fancy of one
man, what rare variety of matter is afforded
from those plain words of [*Oravi pro te Petre*]
Mat. 22. for that place says *Bellarmino*, is other-
wise to be understood of *Peter*, otherwise of
the Popes, and otherwise of the Church of *Rome*.
And [*pro te*] signifies that Christ prayed that *Pe-*
ter might neither err personally nor judicially,
and that *Peters* Successors if they did err per-
sonally, might not err judicially, and that the
Roman Church might not err personally. All this
variety of sense is pretended by the fancy of one
man, to be in a few words which are as plain
and simple as are any Words in Scripture. And
what then in those thousands that are intricate?
So is done with *pasce oves*, which a Man would
think were a Commission as innocent and guilt-
less of designs, as the Sheep in the folds are.
But if it be asked why the Bishop of *Rome* calls
himself Universal Bishop, *pasce oves* is his war-
rant? Why he pretends to a power of deposing
Princes, *Pasce oves*, said Christ to *Peter*, the se-
cond

*Bellar. lib. 4.
de Pontif. c. 3.
S respondeo
primo.*

cond time. If it be demanded why also he pretends to a power of authorizing his subjects to kill him, *Pasce agnos* said Christ the third time. And *pasce* is *doce*, and *pasce* is *Impera*, and *pasce* is *occide*. Now if others should take the same (unreasonableness I will not say, but the same liberty in expounding Scripture, or if it be no licence taken, but that the Scripture it self is so full and redundant in senses quite contrary to what Man soever, or what Company of Men soever shall use this Principle, will certainly find such rare productions from several places, that either the unreasonableness of the thing will discover the error of the proceeding, or else there will be a necessity of permitting a great liberty of judgment, where is so infinite variety without limit or mark of necessary determination. In the first, then because an error is so obvious and ready to our selves, it will be great imprudence or tyranny to be hasty in judging others; but in the latter, it is it that I contend for: for it is most unreasonable, when either the thing it self ministers variety, or that we take licence to ourselves in variety of interpretations, or proclaim to all the World our great weakness, by our actually being deceived, that we should either prescribe to others magisterially when we are in error, or limit their understandings when the thing it self affords liberty and variety.

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S E C T. IV.

Of the difficulty of Expounding Scripture.

THEſe conſiderations are taken from the nature of Scripture it ſelf; but then if we Numb. 1. conſider that we have no certain ways of determining places of difficulty and Queſtion, infallibly and certainly, but that we muſt hope to be ſav'd in the belief of things plain, neceſſary and fundamental, and our pious endeavour to find out Gods meaning in ſuch places which he hath left under a cloud for other great ends ſerved to his own knowledge, we ſhall ſee a very great neceſſity in allowing a liberty in Propheſying without preſcribing authoritatively to other Mens Conſciencies, and becoming Lords and Maſters of their Faith. Now the means of expounding Scripture are either external, or internal. For the external, as Church Authority, Tradition, Fathers, Councils and Decrees of Biſhops, they are of a diſtinct conſideration, and follow after in their order. But here we muſt firſt conſider the invalidity and uncertainty of thoſe means of expounding Scripture which are more proper and internal to the nature of the thing. The great Maſters of Commentaries, ſome whereof have undertaken to know the myſteries, have propounded many ways to expound Scripture, which indeed are excellent helps, but not infallible aſſiſtances, both becauſe they are but moral inſtruments which do not truth *ex abſcondito*, as alſo becauſe they are not infallibly uſed and applyed. 1. ſometimes the ſenſe is drawn forth by the con-

text and connexion of parts: It is well what can be so. But when there is two or three antecedents, and subjects spoken of, what Man what rule shall ascertain me that I make my inference true by drawing the relation to such antecedent; to which I have a mind to apply another hath not. For in a contexture where one part does not always depend upon another, Where things of differing natures intervene and interrupt the first intentions, then it is not always very probable to expound Scripture, take its meaning by its proportion to the neighbouring words. But who desires satisfaction in this, may read the observation specified in S. Gregory's morals upon Job, lib. 5. c. 1. and the instances he there brings are excellent proof, that this way of Interpretation does warrant any Man to impose his Expositions on the belief and understanding of other too confidently and magisterially.

Numb. 2.

2. Another great pretence of medium is conference of places, which *Illyricus* calls *remedium & felicissimam expositionem sanctæ scripturæ*; and indeed so it is if well and temperately used; but then we are beholding to them to do so, for there is no rule that can constrain them to it; for comparing of places is of so indefinite capacity, that if there be ambiguity of words, variety of sense, alteration of circumstances, or difference of stile amongst Divine Writers, then there is nothing that may be abused by wilful People, or may more easily deceive the unwary, or that may amuse the intelligent Observer. The Anabaptists take advantage enough in this proceeding, (and indeed so may any one that list) and when we pretend against them the necessity of baptizing

authority of *nifi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ & spiritu*, they have a parallel for it, and tell us that Chriſt will baptize us with the holy Ghost and with fire, and that one place expounds the other; and because by fire is not meant an Element or any thing that is natural, but an Allegory and figurative expreſſion of the ſame thing; ſo alſo by water may be meant the figure ſignifying the effect or manner of operation of the holy Spirit. Fire in one place, and Water in the other, do not repreſent to us that Chriſts baptiſm is nothing elſe but the cleaſing and purifying us by the holy Ghost; But that which I here note as of greateſt concernment, and which in all reaſon ought to be an utter overthrow to this topique, is an univerſal abuſe of it among thoſe that uſe it, and when two places ſeem to have the ſame expreſſion, or if a word have a double ſignification, becauſe in this place it may have ſuch a ſenſe, therefore it muſt, becauſe in one of the places the ſenſe is to their purpoſe, they conclude that therefore it muſt be ſo in the other too. An inſtance I give in the great Queſtion between the Socinians and the Catholicks. If any place be urg'd in which our Bleſſed Saviour is called God, they ſhew you two or three where the word God is taken in a depreſſed ſenſe, for a *quasi Deus*, as when God ſaid to *Moses*, *Conſtitui te Deum Pharaonis*; and hence they argue, becauſe I can ſhew the word is uſed for a *Deus factus*, therefore no Argument is ſufficient to prove Chriſt to be *Deus verus* from the appellative *Deus*. And might not another argue to the exact contrary, and as well urge that *Moses* is *Deus verus*, becauſe in ſome places the word *Deus* is uſed *pro Deo aeterno*: Both ways the Argument concludes impiouſly and unreaſonably.

Its a fallacy à poſſe ad eſſe affirmativè; becauſe breaking of bread is ſometimes uſed for an Euchariftical manducation in Scripture; therefore I ſhall not from any testimony of Scripture affirming the firſt Chriſtians to have broken bread together, conclude that they liv'd hofpitably and in common ſociety. Becauſe it may poſſibly be eluded, therefore it does not ſignifie any thing. And this is the great way of answering all the Arguments that can be brought againſt any thing that any Man hath a mind to defend; and any Man that reads any controverſies of any ſide, ſhall find as many inſtances of this vanity almoſt as he finds Arguments from Scripture; this fault was of old noted by S. Auſtin, for then they had got the trick; and he is angry at it, *neque enim putamus debemus eſſe præſcriptum, ut quod in aliquo loco vel aliqua per ſimilitudinem ſignificaverit, hoc etiam ſemper ſignificare credamus.*

De doctri.
Chriſtian.
lib. 3.

Numb. 3.

3. Oftentimes Scriptures are pretended to be expounded by a proportion and Analogy of reaſon and this is as the other, if it be well, its well. But unleſs there were ſome *intellectus univerſalis* furniſhed with infallible propoſitions, by referring to which every Man might argue infallibly, this Logick may deceive as well as any of the reſt. For it is with reaſon as with mens taſtes, although there are ſome general principles which are reaſonable to all men, yet every man is not able to draw out all its conſequences, nor to underſtand them when they are drawn forth, nor to believe when he does underſtand them. There is a precept of St. Paul directed to the *Theſſalonians* before they were gather'd into a body of a Church, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. *To withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly.* But if this precept were now obſerv'd, I would ſoon know

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know whether we ſhould not fall into that inconvenience which St. Paul fought to avoid in giving the ſame commandment to the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 5. 9. *I wrote to you that ye ſhould not company with fornicators; And yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then ye muſt go out of the world:* And therefore he reſtrains it to a quitting the ſociety of Chriſtians living ill lives. But now that all the world hath been Chriſtians, if we ſhould ſin in keeping company with vitious Chriſtians, muſt we not alſo go out of this World? Is not the precept made null, becauſe the reaſon is altered, and things are come about, and that the *οἱ πολλοί* are the brethren *ἐκκλησίαι ὀνομαζόμενοι* called brethren, as St. Paul's phraſe is? And yet either this never was conſidered, or not yet believed; for it is generally taken to be obligatory, though (I think) ſeldom practiſed. But when we come to expound Scriptures to a certain ſenſe by Arguments drawn from prudential motives, then we are in a vaſt plain without any ſufficient guide, and we ſhall have ſo many ſenſes, as there are humane prudences. But that which goes further than this, is a parity of Reaſon from a plain place of Scripture to an obſcure, from that which is plainly ſet down in a Text to another that is more remote from it. And thus is that place in St. Matthew forced, *If thy brother reſuſe to be amended, Dic eccleſia.* Hence ſome of the Roman Doctors argue, If Chriſt commands to tell the Church in caſe of Adultery or private injury, then much more in caſe of Heresy. Well, ſuppoſe this to be a good Interpretation: Why muſt I ſtay here? Why may not I alſo add by a parity of reaſon, If the Church muſt be told of Heresy, much more of Treason: And why may not I re-

duce all ſins to the cogniſance of a Church tribunal, as ſome Men do indirectly, and *Snecanus* does heartily and plainly? If a Mans principles be good, and his deductions certain, he need not care whither they carry him. But when an Authority is intruſted to a Perſon, and the extent of his power expreſſed in his Commiſſion, it will not be ſafety to meddle beyond his Commiſſion upon Confidence of a parity of reaſon. To inſtance once more; when Chriſt in *paſce oves* and *tueſ Petrus*, gave power to the Pope to govern the Church (for to that ſence the Church of *Rome* expounds thoſe Authorities) by a certain conſequence of reaſon, ſay they, he gave all things neceſſary for exerciſe of this juriſdiction, and therefore in [*paſce oves*] he gave him an indirect power over Temporals, for that is neceſſary that he may do his duty: Well, having gone thus far, we will go further upon the parity of reaſon, therefore he hath given the Pope the gift of tongues, and he hath given him power to give it; for how elſe ſhall *Xavier* convert the *Indians*? He hath given him alſo power to command the Seas and the Winds, that they ſhould obey him, for this alſo is very neceſſary in ſome caſes, and ſo *paſce oves* is *accipe domum linguarum*, and *Impera ventis*, & *diſpone regum diademata*, & *laicorum pradia*, and *influſum cœli* too, and whatſoever the parity of reaſon will judge equally neceſſary in order to *paſce oves*; when a Man does ſpeak reaſon, it is but reaſon he ſhould be heard; but tho' he may have the good fortune, or the great abilities to do it, yet he hath not a certainty, no regular infallible aſſiſtance, no inſpiration of Arguments and deductions; and if he had, yet becauſe it muſt be reaſon that muſt judge of reaſon, unleſs other means

under.

underſtandings were of the ſame ayre, the ſame conſtitution and ability, they cannot be preſcribed unto, by another mans reaſon; eſpecially be-
 cauſe ſuch reaſonings as uſually are in explication of particular places of Scripture, depend upon minute circumſtances and particularities, in which it is ſo eaſie to be deceiv'd, and ſo hard to ſpeak reaſon regularly and always, that it is the greater wonder if we be not deceived.

4. Others pretend to expound Scripture by *Numb. 4.* the analogy of Faith, and that is the moſt ſure and infallible way (as it is thought:) but upon ſtricter ſurvey it is but a Chimera, a thing in *nubibus* which varies like the right hand and left hand of a Pillar, and at the beſt is but like the Coaſt of a Country to a Traveller out of his way; It may bring him to his journeys end though twenty mile about; it may keep him from running into the Sea, and from miſtaking a river for dry land; but whether this little path or the other be the right way it tells not. So is the analogy of Faith, that is, if I underſtand it right, the rule of Faith, that is the Creed. Now were it not a fine device to go to expound all the Scripture by the Creed, there being in it ſo many thouſand places which have no more relation to any Article in the Creed, than they have to *Tityre tu patula*? Indeed if a man reſolves to keep the analogy of Faith, that is to expound Scripture, ſo as not to do any violence to any fundamental Article, he ſhall be ſure however he errs, yet not to deſtroy Faith, he ſhall not periſh in his Expoſition. And that was the precept given by *St. Paul*, that all Propheſyings ſhould be eſtimated *καὶ ἀναλογία πίστεως, Rom. 6. 12.* and to this very purpoſe, *St. Auſtin* in his Expoſition of *Genefis*, by way of Preface ſets down the

the Articles of Faith, with this deſign and proteſtation of it, that if he ſays nothing againſt thoſe Articles, though he miſs the particular ſenſe of the place, there is no danger, or fault in his Expoſition; but how that analogy of Faith ſhould have any other influence in expounding ſuch places in which thoſe Articles of Faith are neither expreſſed, nor involv'd, I underſtand not. But then if you extend the analogy of Faith further than that which is proper to the rule or Symbol of Faith, then every Man expounds Scripture according to the analogy of Faith, but what? his own Faith: which Faith if it be queſtioned, I am no more bound to expound according to the analogy of another mans Faith, than he to expound according to the analogy of mine. And this is it that is complain'd on of all ſides that overvalue their own opinions. Scripture ſeems ſo clearly to ſpeak what they believe, that they wonder all the World does not ſee it as clear as they do; but they ſatiſfie themſelves with ſaying that it is becauſe they come with prejudice, whereas if they had the true belief, that is, theirs, they would eaſily ſee what they ſee. And this is very true: For if they did believe as others believe, they would expound Scriptures to their ſenſe; but if this be expounding according to the analogy of Faith, it ſignifies no more than this, Be you of my mind and then my Arguments will ſeem concludiſg, and my Authorities and Allegations preſſing and pertinent: And this will ſerve on all ſides, and therefore will do but little ſervice to the determination of Queſtions, or preſcribing to other mens Conſciences on any ſide.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, Conſulting the Originals is thought *Numb. 5.*
 a great matter to Interpretation of Scriptures.
 But this is to ſmall purpoſe: For indeed it will
 expound the Hebrew and the Greek, and recti-
 fie Tranſlations. But I know no man that ſays
 that the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek are ea-
 ſie and certain to be underſtood, and that they
 are hard in Latin and Engliſh: The difficulty
 is in the thing however it be expreſſed, the leaſt
 is in the Language. If the Original Languages
 were our mother Tongue, Scripture is not much
 the eaſier to us; and a natural Greek or a Jew,
 can with no more reaſon, nor Authority ob-
 trude his Interpretation upon other mens Con-
 ſciences, than a Man of another Nation. Add
 to this that the Inſpection of the Original, is no
 more certain way of Interpretation of Scriptrue
 now then it was to the Fathers and Primitive
 Ages of the Church; and yet he that obſerves
 what infinite variety of Tranſlations of the Bible
 were in the firſt Ages of the Church (as S. Hi-
 ſrom obſerves) and never a one like another;
 will think that we ſhall differ as much in our In-
 terpretations as they did, and that the medium
 is as uncertain to us as it was to them; and ſo
 it is; witneſs the great number of late Tranſla-
 tions, and the infinite number of Commentaries,
 which are too pregnant an Argument that we
 neither agree in the underſtanding of the words
 nor of the ſence.

The truth is, all theſe ways of Interpreting *Numb. 6.*
 of Scripture which of themſelves are good
 helps, are made either by deſign, or by our
 infirmities, ways of intricating and involving
 Scriptures in greater difficulty, becauſe men do
 not learn their doctrines from Scripture, but
 come to the underſtanding of Scripture with
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preconceptions and idea's of doctrines of their own, and then no wonder that Scriptures look like Pictures, wherein every man in the room believes they look on him only, and that where-soever he stands, or how often soever he changes his station. So that now what was intended for a remedy, becomes the promoter of our disease, and our meat becomes the matter of sicknesses: And the mischief is, the wit of man cannot find a remedy for it; for there is no rule, no limit, no certain principle, by which all men may be guided to a certain and so infallible an Interpretation, that he can with any equity prescribe to others to believe his Interpretations in places of controversy or ambiguity. A Man would think that the memorable Prophecy of *Jacob*, that the Scepter should not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* come, should have been so clear a determination of the time of the *Messias*, that a Jew should never have doubted it to have been verified in *Jesus of Nazareth*; and yet for this so clear vaticination, they have no less than twenty six Answers. *S. Paul* and *S. James* seem to speak a little diversly concerning Justification by Faith and Works, and yet to my understanding it is very easie to reconcile them: but all men are not of my mind; for *Osiander* in his confutation of the book which *Melanethon* wrote against him, observes, that there are twenty several opinions concerning Justification, all drawn from the Scriptures, by the men only of the *Augustan* Confession. There are sixteen several opinions concerning original sin; and as many definitions of the Sacraments as there are Sects of men that disagree about them.

And

And now what help is there for us in the *Numb. 7.* midst of theſe uncertainties? If we follow any one Tranſlation, or any one Mans Commenta-ry, what rule ſhall we have to chuſe the right by? or is there any one man, that hath tranſlated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? No Tranſlation challenges ſuch a prerogative as to be authentick, but the Vulgar Latin; and yet ſee with what good ſucceſs: For when it was declared authentick by the Council of *Trent*, *Sixtus* put forth a Copy much mended of what it was, and tyed all Men to follow that; but that did not ſatiſfie; for Pope *Clement* reviews and corrects it in many places, and ſtill the Decree remains, in a changed ſubject. And ſecondly, that Tranſlation will be very unapt to ſatiſfie, in which one of their own Men, *Iſidore Clarius*, a Monk of *Breſcia*, found and mended eight thouſand faults, beſides innumerable others which he ſays he pretermitted. And then thirdly, to ſhew how little themſelves were ſatiſfied with it, divers learned Men amongſt them did new tranſlate the Bible, and thought they did God and the Church good ſervice in it. So that if you take this for your precedent, you are ſure to be miſtaken infinitely; If you take any other, the Authors themſelves do not promiſe you any ſecurity. If you reſolve to follow any one as far only as you ſee cauſe, then you only do wrong or right by chance; for you have certainty juſt proportionable to your own ſkill, to your own infallibility. If you reſolve to follow any one, whither ſoever he leads, we ſhall oftentimes come thither, where we ſhall ſee our ſelves become ridiculous, as it happened in the caſe of *Spiridion* Biſhop of *Cyprus*, who ſo reſolv'd to follow his old Book, that when an eloquent
Biſhop

Biſhop who was deſired to Preach read his Text, *Tu autem tolle cubile tuum & ambula*; Spiridion was very angry with him, becauſe in his Book it was *tolle lectum tuum*, and thought it arrogance in the Preacher to ſpeak better Latin than his Tranſlation had done: And if it be thus in Tranſlations, it is far worſe in Expositions: [*Quia ſc. Scripturam ſacram pro ipſa ſui altitudine non uno eodemque ſenſu omnes accipiunt, ut penè quot homines tot illic ſententiæ erui poſſe videantur*, ſaid Vincent. *Lirinensis*] in which every man knows what innumerable ways there are of being miſtaken, God having in things not ſimply neceſſary left ſuch a difficulty upon thoſe parts of Scripture which are the ſubject matters of controverſy *ad edomandum labore ſuperbiam, & intellectum à ſaſtudio revocandum* (as St. Auſtin gives a reaſon) that all that err honeſtly, are therefore to be pitied, and tolerated, becauſe it may be the condition of every Man at one time or other.

Numb. 8.

The Sum is this; Since holy Scripture is the repository of divine Truths, and the great rule of Faith, to which all Sects of Chriſtians do appeal for probation of their ſeveral opinions, and ſince all agree in the Articles of the Creed as things clearly and plainly ſet down, and as containing all that which is of ſimple and prime neceſſity; and ſince on the other ſide there are in Scripture many other myſteries, and matters of Queſtion upon which there is a Veil; ſince there are ſo many Copies with infinite varieties of reading; ſince a various Interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent may much alter the ſence; ſince ſome places have divers literal ſences, many have ſpiritual, myſtical and Allegorical meanings; ſince there are ſo many tropes, anetonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties,

prieties and improprieties of language, whose understanding depends upon ſuch circumſtances that it is almoſt impoſſible to know its proper Interpretation; now that the knowledge of ſuch circumſtances and particular Stories is irrevocably loſt: ſince there are ſome myſteries which at the beſt advantage of expreſſion, are not eaſy to be apprehended, and whoſe explication, by reaſon of our imperfections, muſt needs be dark, ſometimes weak, ſometimes unintelligible: and laſtly, ſince thoſe ordinary means of expounding Scripture, as ſearching the Originals, conference of places, parity of reaſon, and analogy of Faith, are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible, he that is the wiſeſt and by conſequence the likelyeſt to expound trueſt in all probability of reaſon, will be very far from confidence, becauſe every one of theſe and many more are like ſo many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depressing our certainty of finding out truth in ſuch myſteries and amidſt ſo many difficulties. And therefore a wiſe man that conſiders this, would not willingly be preſcrib'd to by others; and therefore if alſo he be a juſt man, he will not impoſe upon others; for it is beſt every man ſhould be left in that liberty from which no man can juſtly take him, unleſs he could ſecure him from error: So that here alſo there is a neceſſity to conſerve the liberty of Propheſying, and interpreting Scripture; a neceſſity deriv'd from the conſideration of the difficulty of Scripture in Queſtions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium, of Interpretation.

S E C T. V.

*Of the insufficiency and uncertainty of Tradition
to Expound Scripture, or determine Questions.*

Numb. 1.

Vincent. Lirin-
enf. in Com-
monitor.

IN the next place, we must consider those extrinsecal means of Interpreting Scripture, and determining Questions, which they most of all confide in that restrain Propheſying with the greatest Tyranny. The first and principal is Tradition, which is pretended not only to expound Scripture (*Neceſſe enim eſt propter tantam varii erroris anfractus, ut Prophetica & Apoſtolica interpretationis linea ſecundum Eccleſiaſtica & Catholici ſenſus normam dirigatur:*) but alſo to propound Articles upon a diſtinct ſtock, ſuch Articles whereof there is no mention and propoſition in Scripture. And in this topick, not only the diſtinct Articles are clear and plain, like as the fundamentals of Faith expreſſed in Scripture, but alſo it pretends to expound Scripture, and to determine Questions with ſo much clarity, and certainty, as there ſhall neither be error nor doubt remaining, and therefore no diſagreeing is here to be endured. And indeed it is moſt true if Tradition can perform theſe pretenſions, and teach us plainly, and aſſure us infallibly of all truths, which they require us to believe, we can in this caſe have no reaſon to diſbelieve them, and therefore are certainly Hereticks if we do, becauſe without a crime, without ſome humane intereſt or collateral deſign, we cannot diſbelieve traditive Doctrines or traditive Interpretation, if it be infallibly prov'd to us that tradition is an infallible guide.

But here I firſt conſider that tradition is no *Numb. 2.*
 repository of Articles of Faith, and therefore
 the not following it is no Argument of heresy;
 for beſides that I have ſhewed Scripture in its
 plain expreſſes to be an abundant rule of Faith
 and manners, Tradition is a topick as fallible
 as any other; ſo fallible that it cannot be ſuffi-
 cient evidence to any man in a matter of Faith
 or Queſtion of heresy.

For, 1. I find that the Fathers were infinitely *Numb. 3.*
 deceived in their account and enumeration of
 Traditions, ſometimes they did call ſome Tra-
 ditions, ſuch, not which they knew to be ſo, but
 by Arguments and preſumptions they concluded
 them ſo. Such as was that of St. Auſtin, *ea que* *E. iſt. 118. ad*
universalis tenet Eccleſia nec à Conciliis inſtituta *Jovinian.*
operiuntur, credibile eſt ab Apoſtolorum traditione *De bapt. contr.*
deſendiſſe. *Donat. lib. 4*
c. 24. Now ſuppoſe this rule probable,
 but's the moſt, yet it is not certain; It might
 come by cuſtom, whoſe Original was not
 known, but yet could not derive from an Apo-
 ſtolical principle. Now when they conclude of
 particular Traditions by a general rule, and
 that general rule not certain, but at the moſt
 probable in any thing, and certainly falſe in
 ſome things, it is no wonder if the productions,
 that is, their judgments, and pretence fail ſo
 often. And if I ſhould but inſtance in all the
 particulars, in which Tradition was pretended
 truly or uncertainly in the firſt Ages, I ſhould
 multiply them to a troubleſome variety; for it
 was then accounted ſo glorious a thing to have
 ſpoken with the perſons of the Apoſtles, that if
 any man could with any colour pretend to it,
 he might abuſe the whole Church, and obtrude
 what he liſted under the ſpecious title of A-
 poſtolical Tradition, and it is very notorious to

every man that will but read and obſerve the Recognitions or ſtomata of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, where there is enough of ſuch falſe waſh ſhewed in every book, and pretended to be leſs than from the Apoſtles. In the firſt Age after the Apoſtles, *Papias* pretended he received a Tradition from the Apoſtles, that Chriſt before the day of Judgment ſhould reign a thouſand years upon Earth, and his Saints with him in temporal felicities; and this thing proceeding from ſo great an Authority as the teſtimony of *Papias*, drew after it all or moſt of the Chriſtians in the firſt three hundred years. For beſides, that the Millenary opinion is expreſsly taught by *Papias*, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Lactantius*, *Severus*, *Victorinus*, *Apollinaris*, *Nepos*, and divers others famous in their time. *Juſtin Martyr* in his Dialogue againſt Trypho ſays, it was the belief of all Chriſtians exact Orthodox, καὶ εἰ τις εἰς ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς, and yet there was no ſuch Tradition but a miſtake in *Papias*; but I find it nowhere ſpoke againſt, till *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* confuted *Nepos's* Book, and converted *Coracion* the *Egyptian* from the opinion. Now if a Tradition, whoſe beginning of being called ſo began with a Scholar of the Apoſtles (for ſo was *Papias*) and then continued for ſome Ages upon the meane Authority of ſo famous a man, did yet deceive the Church: much more fallible is the pretence when two or three hundred years after, it begins to commences, and then by ſome learned man firſt called a Tradition Apoſtolicall. And ſo happened in the caſe of the *Arrian* heresy, which the *Nicene* Fathers did confute by objecting a contrary Tradition Apoſtolicall, as *Theodoret* reports; and yet if they had not had better Arguments

ediments from Scripture than from Tradition;
 they would have fail'd much in so good a cause;
 for this very pretence the *Arrians* themselves
 made, and desired to be tryed by the Fathers of
 the first three hundred years, which was a con-
 stantation sufficient to them who pretended a clear
 Tradition, because it was unimaginable that the
 Tradition should leap so as not to come from
 the first to the last by the middle. But that
 this tryal was sometime declined by that ex-
 cellent man St. *Athanasius*, although at other
 times confidently and truly pretended, it was
 an Argument the Tradition was not so * clear,
 that both sides might with some fairness pretend
 it. And therefore one of the prime Foun-
 ders of their heresy, the Heretick † *Artemon*
 having observed the advantage might be taken
 by any Sect that would pretend Tradition,
 because the medium was plausible and con-
 sidering of so many particulars, that it was hard
 to be redargued, pretended a Tradition from
 the Apostles, that Christ was φίλος ἀνδρῶν,
 and that the Tradition did descend by a con-
 tinual succession in the Church of *Rome* to Pope
 Zephyrinus's time inclusively, and till *Zepherinus* had
 interrupted the series and corrupted the Do-
 ctine; which pretence if it had not had some
 appearance of truth, so as possibly to abuse the
 Church, had not been worthy of confutation,
 which yet was with care undertaken by an old
 Writer, out of whom *Eusebius* transcribes a
 large passage to reprove the vanity of the pre-
 tender. But I observe from hence, that it was
 usual to pretend to Tradition, and that it was
 easier pretended than confuted, and I doubt not
 oftner done than discovered. A great Que-
 stion arose in *Africa* concerning the Baptism

*Vide Petav. in
 Epiph. hær. 69.*

* καὶ γὰρ
 εἰσὶ πῖνες ὧ
 φίλοι ἑλε-
 γον ἀπὸ τῶ
 ημετέρου γε-
 νος ὁμολο-
 γούσας αὐ-
 τὸν Χριστὸν
 εἶναι ἀνθρώ-
 πον ὃ ὡς
 ἀνθρώπων
 γεγόμενον
 ἀποφαινό-
 μενοι. οἷς ἔ-
 σωπηθή-
 μοι, ἔδε-
 ῖον πλείους
 ταῦτα μοι
 δοξάσαντες
 ἔποιεν,
*Justin Mart.
 dial. cum
 Tryph. Jud.
 † Euseb. l. i. c.*

of Hereticks, whether it were valid or no. St. Cyprian and his party appealed to Scripture; Stephen Biſhop of Rome and his party, would be judged by cuſtom and Tradition Eccleſiaſtical. See how much the nearer the Queſtion was to a determination, either that probation was not accounted by St Cyprian, and the Biſhops both of *Asia* and *Africk*, to be a good Argument, and ſufficient to determine them, or there was no certain Tradition againſt them; for unleſs one of theſe two do it, nothing could excuſe them from oppoſing a known truth, unleſs peradventure St. Cyprian, Firmilian, the Biſhops of *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and almoſt two parts of the World were ignorant of ſuch a Tradition, for they knew of none ſuch, and ſome of them expreſſly denied it. And the ſixth general Synod approves of the Canon made in the Council of *Carthage* under Cyprian upon this very ground, becauſe in *prædictorum præſulum locis & ſolum ſecundum traditionis conſuetudinem ſervatus eſt*; they had a particular Tradition for Rebaptization, and therefore there could be no Tradition Univerſal againſt it, or if there were they knew not of it, but much for the contrary; and then it would be remembred that a conceal'd Tradition was like a ſilent Thunder, or a Law not promulgated; it neither was known, nor was obligatory. And I ſhall obſerve this too, that this very Tradition was ſo obſcure, and was ſo obſcurely delivered, ſilently proclaimed, that St. Auſtin, who diſputed againſt the Donatiſts upon this very Queſtion was not able to prove it, but by a conſequence which he thought probable and credible, as appears in his diſcourſe againſt the Donatiſts. The Apoſtles ſaith St. Auſtin

Can. 2.

L. 5. de Baptiſm. contr. Donat. c. 23.

preſcrib'd

preſcrib'd nothing in this particular: But this cuſtom which is contrary to Cyprian ought to be believed to have come from their Tradition, as many other things which the Catholick Church obſerves. That's all the ground and all the reaſon; nay the Church did waver concerning that Queſtion, and before the deciſion of a Council, Cyprian and others might diſſent without breach of charity. It was plain then there was no clear Tradition in the Queſtion, poſſibly there might be a cuſtom in ſome Churches poſt-
 erate to the times of the Apoſtles, but nothing that was obligatory, no Tradition Apoſtolic. But this was a ſuppletory device ready at hand whenever they needed it; and St. Auſtin con-
 demned the Pelagians, in the Queſtion of Original Sin, by the cuſtom of exorcism and inſufflation, which St. Auſtin ſaid came from the Apoſtles by Tradition, which yet was then, and is now ſo impoſſible to be prov'd, that he that ſhall affirm it, ſhall gain only the reputation of a bold man and a confident.

Lib. 1. de Baptiſm. c. 18.

De peccat. originali. l. 2. c. 40. contra Pelag. & Caleſt.

2. I conſider if the report of Traditions in the Primitive times ſo near the Ages Apoſtolic was ſo uncertain, that they were fain to aim at them by conjectures, and grope as in the dark, the uncertainty is much encreaſed ſince, be-
 cauſe there are many famous Writers whoſe works are loſt, which yet if they had continued, they might have been good records to us, as Clemens Romanus, Egeſippus, Nepos, Caracion, Dionyſius Areopagite, of Alexandria, of Corinth, Firmilian and many more: And ſince we ſee pretences have been made without reaſon in thoſe Ages where they might better have been confuted, than now they can, it is greater prudence to ſuſpect any later pretences, ſince ſo

Numb. 4.

many Sects have been, so many wars, so many corruptions in Authors, so many Authors, so much ignorance hath intervened, and so many interests have been served, that now the rule is to be altered; and whereas it was of old time credible, that that was Apostolical which in beginning they knew not, now quite contrary we cannot safely believe them to be Apostolical unless we do know their beginning to have been from the Apostles. For this consisting of probabilities and particulars, which put together make up a moral demonstration, the Argument which I now urge hath been growing these five hundred years; and if anciently there was as much as to evacuate the Authority of Tradition, much more is there now absolutely to destroy it, when all the particulars, which time and infinite variety of humane accidents have been amassing together, are now concentrated, and are united by way of constipation. Because every Age and every great change, and every heresy, and every interest, hath increased the difficulty of finding out true Traditions.

Numb. 5.

3. There are very many Traditions which are lost, and yet they are concerning matters of as great consequence as most of those Questions for the determination whereof Traditions are pretended: It is more than probable, that as in Baptism and the Eucharist the very forms of ministration are transmitted to us, so also in confirmation and ordination, and that there were special directions for visitation of the sick, and explicate interpretations of those difficult places of *St. Paul* which *St. Peter* affirmed to be so difficult that the ignorant do wrest them to their own damnation, and yet no Church hath conserved these or those many more which

St. Basil

St. Baſil affirms to be ſo many that *ὅτιλείπειν ἡμέτερον* Cap. 29. de
ἀγγραφαὶ καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὰ μυστήρια ἀπογόμενον; the *Spir. Sancto.*
 day would fail him in the very ſimple enumeration
 of all Traditions Eccleſiaſtical. And if
 the Church hath fail'd in keeping the great va-
 riety of Traditions, it will hardly be thought a
 fault in a private perſon to neglect Tradition,
 which either the whole Church hath very much
 neglected inculpably, or elſe the whole Church
 is very much to blame. And who can aſcertain
 that ſhe hath not entertained ſome which are
 no Traditions as well as loſt thouſands that are?
 That ſhe did entertain ſome falſe Traditions,
 I have already prov'd; but it is alſo as probable
 that ſome of thoſe which theſe Ages did pro-
 pound for Traditions, are not ſo, as it is cer-
 tain that ſome which the firſt Ages call'd Tra-
 ditions, were nothing leſs.

4. There are ſome opinions which when they *Numb. 6.*
 began to be publickly received, began to be
 accounted prime Traditions, and ſo became
 ſuch not by a native title, but by adoption;
 and nothing is more uſual than for the Fathers
 to colour their popular opinion with ſo great an
 appellative. 'St. Auſtin call'd the communicating
 of Infants an Apoſtolical Tradition, and yet
 we do not praſtiſe it, becauſe we diſbelieve
 the Allegation. And that every cuſtom, which
 at firſt introduction was but a private fancy or
 ſingular practice, grew afterwards into a pub-
 lick rite and went for a Tradition after a while
 continuance, appears by Tertullian who ſeems to *Contra Mar-*
 juſtifie it, *Non enim exiſtimas tu licitum eſſe cui-*
cunque fideli conſtituere quod Deo placere illi viſum
ſuerit, ad diſciplinam & ſalutem. And again, a *De coronat.*
quicumque traditore cenſetur, nec authorem reſpicias *lit. c. 3. & q.*
ſed authoritatem. And St. Hierom moſt plainly,

Apud Euseb.
l. 3. c. 24.

Præcepta majorum Apostolicas Traditiones existimat. And when Irenæus had observed that great variety in the keeping of Lent, which yet to be a forty days Fast is pretended to descend from Tradition Apostolical, in fasting but one day before Easter, some say some forty, and this even long before Irenæus time, he gives this reason, *Varietas illa præcipit apud Majores nostros qui non accurate consuetudinem eorum qui vel simplicitate quâdam vel privata authoritate in posterum aliquid statuisse observarant* [extra translatione Christophorsoni.] And there are yet some points of good concernment which if any man should Question in a high manner, they would prove indeterminable by Scripture, or sufficient reason, and yet I doubt not their confident Defenders would say they are opinions of the Church, and quickly pretend a Tradition from the very Apostles, and believe themselves so secure that they could not be discovered, because the Question never having been disputed, gives them occasion to say that which had no beginning known, was certainly from the Apostles. For why should not Divines do in the Question of reconfirmation as in that of rebaptization? Are not the grounds equal from an indelible character in one as in the other; and if it happen such a Question as this after contestation should be determined not by any positive decree, but by the concession of one part, and the Authority and reputation of the other, does not the next Argument stand fair to be abused with a pretence of Tradition in the matter of reconfirmation, which never yet came to a serious Question? For so it was in the Question of rebaptization for which there was then no more evident Traditions.

there is now in the Queſtion of reconfirmation, as I proved formerly, but yet 'twas carried upon that Title.

3. There is great variety in the probation of *Numb. 7.*

Tradition, ſo that whatever is proved to be Tradition, is not equally and alike credible; for nothing but univerſal Tradition is of it ſelf credible; other Traditions in their juſt proportion as they partake of the degrees of univerſality. Now that a Tradition be univerſal, or

which is all one that it be a credible Teſtimony, *St. Irenæus* requires that Tradition ſhould derive *Lib. 3. c. 4.*

from all the Churches Apoſtolicall. And therefore according to this rule there was no ſufficient medium to determine the Queſtion about Eaſter, becauſe the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches had ſeveral Traditions reſpectively, and both pretended from the Apoſtles. *Cle-*

mens Alexandrinus ſays, it was a ſeret Tradition from the Apoſtles that Chriſt preached but one

year: But *Irenæus* ſays it did derive from *Here-*

ticks, and ſays that he by Tradition firſt from *St. John*, and then from his Diſciples received

another Tradition, that Chriſt was almoſt fifty years old when he dyed, and ſo by confe-

ſſence preached almoſt twenty years; both of them were deceived, and ſo had all that had be-

lieved the report of either pretending Tradition Apoſtolicall. Thus the cuſtom in the Latin

Church of faſting on Saturday was againſt that Tradition which the Greeks had from the Apo-

ſtles; and therefore by this diſiſion and want of conſent, which was the true Tradition, was ſo

absolutely indeterminable, that both muſt needs loſe much of their reputation. But how then

can not only particular Churches but ſingle perſons are all the proof we have for a Tradition?

And

L. I. Stromat.

L. 2. c. 39.

Omnes Senio-

res reſtantur

qui in Aſia a-

pud Johannem

Discipulum

Domini conver-

nerunt id ip-

ſum tradiſſe

eis Johannem,

&c. & qui a-

lios Apoſtolos

viderunt hac

eadem ab ipſis

audierunt &

reſtantur de

ejusmodi rela-

tione.

*Salperton.
diſſert. 51. in
Rom.*

And this often happened ; I think St. *Auſtin* is the chief Argument and Authority we have for the Aſſumption of the Virgin *Mary* ; the Baptiſm of Infants is called a Tradition by *Origen* alone at firſt, and from him by others. The proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt from the Son, which is an Article the Greek Church diſavows, derives from the Tradition Apoſtolical, as it is pretended ; and yet before St. *Auſtin* we hear nothing of it very clearly or certainly, for as much as that whole myſtery concerning the bleſſed Spirit was ſo little explicated in Scripture, and ſo little derived to them by Tradition, that till the Council of *Nice*, you ſhall hardly find any form of worſhip or perſonal addreſs of devotion to the holy Spirit, as *Erasmus* obſerves, and I think the contrary will very hardly be verified. And for this particular in which I inſtance, whatſoever is in Scripture concerning it, is againſt that which the Church of *Rome* calls Tradition, which makes the Greeks ſo confident as they are of the point, and is an Argument of the vanity of ſome things which for no greater reaſon are called Traditions, but becauſe one man hath ſaid ſo, and that they can be proved by no better Argument to be true. Now in this caſe wherein Tradition deſcends upon us with unequal certainty, it would be very unequal to require of us an abſolute belief of every thing not written, for fear we be accounted to ſlight Tradition Apoſtolical. And ſince nothing can require our ſupreme aſſent, but that which is truly Catholick and Apoſtolick, and to ſuch a Tradition is requir'd as *Irenæus* ſays, the conſent of all thoſe Churches which the Apoſtles planted, and where they did preſide, this topick will be of ſo little uſe

in judging heresies that (besides what is deposited in Scripture) it cannot be proved in any thing but in the Canon of Scripture it self, and as it is now received, even in that there is some variety.

And therefore there is wholly a mistake in *Numb. 8.* this business; for when the Fathers appeal to Tradition, and with much earnestness, and some clamour they call upon Hereticks to conform to or to be tryed by Tradition, it is such a Tradition as delivers the fundamental points of Christianity, which were also recorded in Scripture. But because the Canon was not yet perfectly consign'd, they call'd to that testimony they had, which was the testimony of the Churches Apostolical, whose Bishops and Priests being the *Antistites religionis*, did believe and preach Christian Religion and conserve all its great mysteries according as they had been taught. *Irenaeus* calls this a Tradition Apostolical, *Christum accepisse calicem, & dixisse sanguinem suum esse, & docuisse novam oblationem novi Testamenti, quam Ecclesia per Apostolos accipiens offert per totum mundum.* And the Fathers in these Ages confute Hereticks by Ecclesiastical Tradition, that is, they confront against their impious and blasphemous doctrines that Religion which the Apostles having taught to the Churches where they did preside, their Successors did still preach, and for a long while together suffered not the enemy to sow tares amongst their wheat. And yet these doctrines which they called Traditions, were nothing but such fundamental truths which were in Scripture, as *πάντα σύμφωνα ταῖς γραφαῖς*, as *Irenaeus* in *Eusebius* observes, in the instance of *Polycarpus*, and it is manifest by considering what

*Vide Irena.
l. 3. & 4. cont.
heres.*

what heresies they fought against, the heresies of *Ebion*, *Cerintus*, *Nicolaitans*, *Valentinians*, *Carpocratians*, persons that denyed the Son of God, the Unity of the God-head, that preached impurity, that practised Sorcery and Witch-craft. And now that they did rather urge Tradition against them than Scripture was, because the publick Doctrine of all the Apostolical Churches was at first more known and famous than many parts of the Scripture, and because some Hereticks, denyed St. *Luke's* Gospel, some received none but St. *Matthew's*, some rejected all St. *Paul's* Epistles, and it was a long time before the whole Canon was consign'd by universal Testimony, some Churches having one part some another, *Rome* her self had not all, so that in this case the Argument from Tradition was the most famous, the most certain, and the most prudent. And now according to this rule they had more Traditions than we have, and Traditions did by degrees lessen as they came to be written, and their necessity was less, as the knowledge of them was ascertained to us by a better Keeper of Divine Truths. All that great mysteriousness of Christs Priest-hood, the unity of his Sacrifice, Christs Advocacion and Intercession for us in Heaven, and many other excellent Doctrines might very well be accounted Traditions before St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Hebrews* was publish'd to all the World; but now they are written truths; and if they had not, possibly we might either have lost them quite, or doubted of them as we do of many other Traditions, by reason of the insufficiency of the propounder. And therefore it was that St. *Peter* took order that the Gospel should be Writ, for he had promised that he

2 Pet. i. 13.

would

would do something which after his decease should have these things in remembrance. He knew it was not safe trusting the report of men where the fountain might quickly run dry, or be corrupted so insensibly, that no cure could be found for it, nor any just notice taken of it till it were incurable. And indeed there is scarce any thing but what is written in Scripture, that can with any confidence of Argument pretend to derive from the Apostles, except rituals, and manners of ministration; but no doctrines or speculative mysteries are so transmitted to us by so clear a current, that we may see a visible channel, and trace it to the Primitive fountains. It is said to be a Tradition Apostolical, that no Priest should baptize without Chrism and the command of the Bishop: Suppose it were, yet we cannot be oblig'd to believe it with much confidence, because we have but little proof for it, scarce any thing but the single testimony of St. *Hierom.* *Dialog. adv. Lucifer.* And yet if it were, this is but a ritual, of which in passing by, I shall give that account: That, suppose this and many more rituals did derive clearly from Tradition Apostolical (which yet but very few do) yet it is hard that any Church should be charged with a crime for not observing such rituals, because we see some of them which certainly did derive from the Apostles, are expir'd and gone out in a desuetude; such as are abstinence from blood, and from things strangled, the cœnobitick life of secular persons, the college of widows, to worship standing upon the Lords-day, to give milk and honey to the newly baptized, and many more of the like nature; now there having been no mark to distinguish the necessity of one from the indiffe-

indifferency of the other, they are all alike neceſſary, or alike indifferent, if the former, why does no Church obſerve them? if the latter, why does the Church of *Rome* charge upon others the ſhame of novelty, for leaving of ſome Rites and Ceremonies which by her own practice we are taught to have no obligation in them, but to be adiaphorous? *St. Paul* gave order, that a Biſhop ſhould be the Husband of one Wife; The Church of *Rome* will not allow ſo much; other Churches allow more: The Apoſtles commanded Chriſtians to Faſt on Wednesday and Friday, as appears in their Canons: The Church of *Rome* Faſts Friday and Saturday, and not on Wednesday: The Apoſtles had their Agapæ or love Feaſts, we ſhould believe them ſcandalous: They uſed a kiſs of charity in ordinary addreſſes, the Church of *Rome* keeps it only in their Maſs, other Churches quite omit it: The Apoſtles permitted Prieſts and Deacons to live in conjugal Society as appears in the 5. Canon of the Apoſtles (which to them is an Argument who believe them ſuch) and yet the Church of *Rome*, by no means will endure it; nay more, *Michael Medina* gives Teſtimony that of 84. Canons Apoſtolical which *Clemens* collected, ſcarce ſix or eight are obſerved by the Latin Church, and *Pereſius* gives this account of it, *In illis contineri multa quæ temporum corruptione non plenè obſervantur, aliis pro temporis & materia qualitate aut oblitteratis, aut totius Eccleſiæ magiſterio abrogatis.* Now it were good that they which take a liberty to themſelves, ſhould alſo allow the ſame to others. So that for one thing or other, all Traditions excepting thoſe very few that are abſolutely univerſal, will loſe all their obligation, and become no competent medium

De ſacr. hom. continent.
lib. 5. c. 105.

De Tradit.
part. 3. c. de
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medium to confine mens practices, or limit their faiths, or determine their perſuaſions. Either for the difficulty of their being prov'd, the incompetency of the testimony that tranſmits them, or the indifferency of the thing tranſmitted, all Traditions both ritual and doctrinal are disabled from determining our conſciences either to a neceſſary believing or obeying.

6. To which I add by way of confirmation, *Numb. 9.* that there are ſome things called Traditions, and are offered to be proved to us by a Testimony, which is either false or not extant. *Clemens of Alexandria* pretended it a Tradition that the Apostles preached to them that dyed in infidelity, even after their death, and then raised them to life, but he proved it only by the Testimony of the Book of *Hermes*; he affirmed it to be a Tradition Apostolical, that the Greeks were ſaved by their Philosophy, but he had no other Authority for it but the Apocryphal Books of *Peter* and *Paul*. *Tertullian* and *St. Basil* pretend it an Apostolical Tradition, to ſign in the air with the ſign of the Croſs, but this was only conſign'd to them in the Goſpel of *Nicodemus*. But to inſtance once for all in the Epistle of *Marcellus* to the Biſhop of *Antioch*, where he affirms that it is the Canon of the Apostles, *prater ſententiam Romani Pontificis, non poſſe Concilia celebrari*. And yet there is no ſuch Canon extant, nor ever was for ought appears in any Record we have; and yet the Collection of the Canons is ſo intire, that though it hath ſomething more than what was Apostolical, yet it hath nothing leſs. And now that I am caſually fallen upon an inſtance from the Canons of the Apostles, I conſider that there cannot in the world a greater inſtance

*Apud Grati-
an. diſt. 16. c.
Canon.*

*Lib. 1. c. 18.
de Orthod. fide.*

instance be given how easy it is to be abused in the believing of Traditions. For first to the first 50. which many did admit for Apostolical, 35 more were added, which most men now count spurious, all men call dubious, and some of them universally condemned by peremptory sentence, even by them who are greatest admirers of that Collection, as 65. 67. and 84. Canons. For the first 50. it is evident that there are some things so mixt with them, and no mark of difference left, that the credit of all is much impaired, insomuch that *Isidore of Sevil* says, *they were Apocryphal, made by Hereticks, and published under the title Apostolical, but neither the Fathers nor the Church of Rome did give assent to them.* And yet they have prevail'd so far amongst some, that *Damasen* is of opinion they should be received equally with the Canonical writings of the Apostles. One thing only I observe (and we shall find it true in most writings, whose Authority is urged in Questions of Theology) that the Authority of the Tradition is not it which moves the assent, but the nature of the thing; and because such a Canon is delivered, they do not therefore believe the sanction or proposition so deliver'd, but disbelieve the Tradition, if they do not like the matter, and so do not judge of the matter by the Tradition but of the Tradition by the matter. And thus the Church of Rome rejects the 84 or 85 Canon of the Apostles, not because it is delivered with less Authority, than the last 35 are, but because it reckons the Canon of Scripture otherwise than it is at Rome. Thus also the fifth Canon amongst the first 50, because it approves the marriage of Priests and Deacons does not perswade them

to approve of it too, but it self becomes suspected for approving it: So that either they accuse themselves of palpable contempt of the Apostolical Authority, or else that the reputation of such Traditions is kept up to serve their own ends, and therefore when they encounter them, they are more to be upheld; which what else is it but to teach all the World to condemn such pretences and undervalue Traditions, and to apply to others a reason why they should do that, which to them that give the occasion is most unreasonable?

7. The Testimony of the Ancient Church be- *Numb. 101*

ing the only means of proving Tradition, and sometimes their dictates and doctrine being the Tradition pretended of necessity to be imitated, is considerable that men in their estimate of it take their rise from several Ages and differing Testimonies, and are not agreed about the competency of their Testimony; and the reasons that on each side make them differ, are such as make the Authority it self the less authentick and more repudiable. Some will allow only of the three first Ages, as being most pure, most persecuted, and therefore most holy, least interested, serving fewer designs, having fewest passions, and therefore more likely to speak the truth for Gods sake and its own, as best complying with their great end of acquiring Heaven in recompence of losing their lives: Others say, that those Ages being persecuted minded present Doctrines proportionable to their purposes and constitution of the Ages, and make little or nothing of those Questions which this day vex Christendom: And both speak so: The first Ages speak greatest truth, but not pertinently. The next Ages, the Ages

** Vid. Card.
Petron. leire
au Sieur Ca-
santon.*

of the four general Councils spake some things not much more pertinently to the present Questions, but were not so likely to speak true, by reason of their dispositions contrary to the capacity and circumstance of the first Ages; and if they speak wisely as Doctors, yet not certainly as witnesses of such propositions which the first Ages noted not; and yet unless they had noted could not possibly be Traditions. And therefore either of them will be less usefless as to our present affairs. For indeed the Questions which now are the publick trouble, were not considered or thought upon for many hundred years, and therefore prime Tradition there is none as to our purpose, and it will be an insufficient medium to be used or pretended in the determination; and to dispute concerning the truth or necessity of Traditions, in the Questions of our times, is as if Historians disputing about a Question in the English Story, should fall on wrangling whether *Livy* or *Plutarch* were the best Writers: And the earnest disputes about Traditions are to no better purpose. For no Church at this day admits the one half of those things which certainly by the Fathers were called Traditions Apostolical, and no Testimony of ancient Writers does consign the one half of the present Questions, to be or not to be Traditions. So that they who admit only the Doctrine and Testimony of the first Ages cannot be determined in most of their doubts which now trouble us, because their Writings are of matters wholly differing from the present disputes, and they which would bring in after Ages to the Authority of a competent judge or witness, say the same thing; for they plainly confess that the first Ages spake little or nothing to the present Question.

Question, or at leaſt nothing to their ſenſe of them; for therefore they call in aid from the following Ages, and make them ſuppletory and auxiliary to their deſigns, and therefore there are no Traditions to our purpoſes. And they who would willingly have it otherwiſe, yet have taken no courſe it ſhould be otherwiſe; for they when they had opportunity in the Councils of the laſt Ages to determine what they had a mind yet they never named the number, nor expreſſed the particular Traditions which they would fain have the World believe to be Apocryphical: But they have kept the bridle in their own hands, and made a reſerve of their own power, that if need be, they may make new pretenſions, or not be put to it to juſtify the ſame by the engagement of a conciliary declaration.

Laſtly, We are acquitted by the Teſtimony *Numb. 11.* the Primitive Fathers, from any other neceſſity of believing, than of ſuch Articles as are recorded in Scripture: And this is done by them, whoſe Authority is pretended the great Argument for Tradition, as appears largely in *Irenæus*, who diſputes profeſſedly for the ſufficiency of Scripture againſt certain Hereticks, *Lib. 3. ca. 2. contr. hæreſ.* who affirm ſome neceſſary truths not to be written. It was an excellent ſaying of *St. Baſil* and will never be wipt out with all the eloquence of *Origen* [in his *Serm. de fide. Manifeſtus eſt fidei ſermon, & liquidum ſuperbia vitium vel reſpuere a-* *quid eorum quæ Scriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod ſcriptum non eſt.*] And it is but a poor ſervice to ſay that every particular Tradition is conſigned in Scripture by thoſe places which give Authority to Tradition; and ſo the introducing of Tradition is not a ſuper-inducing any

thing over or beſides Scripture, becauſe Tradition is like a Meſſenger, and the Scripture is like his Letters of Credence, and therefore Authorizes whatſoever Tradition ſpeaketh. For ſuppoſing Scripture does conſign the Authority of Tradition (which it might do before all the whole Inſtrument of Scripture it ſelf was conſign'd, and then afterwards there might be no need of Tradition) yet ſuppoſing it, it will follow that all thoſe Tradition) which are truly prime and Apoſtolical, are to be entertain'd according to the intention of the Deliverers, which indeed is ſo reaſonable of it ſelf, that we need not Scripture to perſuade us to it; it ſelf is authentick as Scripture is, if it derives from the ſame fountain; and a word is never the more the Word of God for being written nor the leſs for not being written; but it will not follow that whatſoever is pretended to be Tradition, is ſo, neither is the credit of thoſe particular inſtances conſign'd in Scripture; *doloſus verſatur in generalibus*, but that this craft is too palpable. And if a general and indefinite conſignation of Tradition be ſufficient to warrant every particular that pretends to be Tradition, then St. Baſil had ſpoken to no purpoſe by ſaying it is Pride and Apoſtacy from the Faith, to bring in what is not written: For if either any man brings in what is written, or what he ſays is delivered, then the firſt being expreſs in Scripture, and the ſecond being conſign'd in Scripture, no man can be charged with ſuppoſing inducing what is not written, he hath his Anſwer ready; and then theſe are zealous words absolutely to no purpoſe; but if ſuch general conſignation does not warrant every thing that pretends to Tradition, but only ſuch as are

ly prov'd to be Apoſtolicall; then Scripture is uſeleſs as to this particular; for ſuch Tradition gives teſtimony to Scripture, and therefore is of it ſelf firſt, and more credible, for it is credible of it ſelf; and therefore unleſs St. *Baſil* thought that all the will of God in matters of Faith and Doctrine were written, I ſee not what end nor what ſenſe he could have in theſe words: For no man in the world except *Enthuſiaſts* and mad-men ever obtruded a Doctrine upon the Church, but he pretended Scripture for it or Tradition, and therefore no man could be preſented by theſe words, no man confuted, no man inſtructed, no not *Enthuſiaſts* or *Montaniſts*. For ſuppoſe either of them ſhould ſay, that ſince in Scripture the holy Ghoſt is promiſed to abide with the Church for ever, to teach, whatever they pretend the Spirit in any Age hath taught them, is not to ſuper-induce any thing beyond what is written, becauſe the truth of the Spirit, his veracity, and his perpetual teaching being promiſed and attested in Scripture, Scripture hath juſt ſo conſign'd all ſuch Revelations, *Perron* ſaith it hath all ſuch Traditions. But I will trouble my ſelf no more with Arguments from any humane Authorities; but he that is ſurprized with the belief of ſuch Authorities, and will but conſider the very many Teſtimonies of Antiquity to this purpoſe, as of * *Conſtantine*, † *S. Hierom*, || *S. Auſtin*, * *S. Athanaſius*, † *S. Hilary*, || *St. Epiphanius*, and divers others, all ſpeaking words to the ſame ſenſe, with that ſaying of St. * *Paul*, *Nemo ſentiat ſuper quod ſcriptum eſt*, will ſee that there is reaſon, that ſince no man is materially a Heretick, but he that errs in a point of Faith, and all Faith is ſufficiently recorded in Scripture, the judgment

* *Orat. ad Nicen. PP. apud Theodor. l. 1.*

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† *In Matth. l. 4. c. 23. & in Aggaum.*

|| *De bono viduil. c. 1.*

* *Orat. contr. gent.*

† *In Pſal. 132.*

|| *L. 2. contra hæreſ. tom. 1. har. 61.*

• *1. Cor. 4.*

of Faith and Heresy is to be deriv'd from thence, and no man is to be condemned for dissenting in an Article for whose probation Tradition only is pretended; only according to the degree of its evidence, let every one determine himself, but of this evidence we must not judge for others; for unless it be in things of Faith, and absolute certainties, evidence is a word of relation, and so supposes two terms, the object and the faculty; and it is an imperfect speech to say a thing is evident in it self (unless we speak of first principles or clearest revelations) for that may be evident to one that is not so to another, by reason of the pregnancy of some apprehensions, and the immaturity of others.

This Discourse hath its intention in Traditions Doctrinal and Ritual, that is such Traditions which propose Articles new *in materia* but now if Scripture be the repository of all Divine Truths sufficient for us, Tradition must be considered as its instrument, to convey its great mysteriousness to our understandings; it is said there are traditive Interpretations as well as traditive propositions, but these have not much distinct consideration in them, both because their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former considerations; as also because in very deed, there are no such things as traditive Interpretations universal: For as for particulars they signifie no more, but that they are not sufficient determinations of Questions Theological, therefore because they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more Argument than the particular authority of those men whose Commentaries they are, and therefore must be considered with them.

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The ſum is this: Since the Fathers who are *Numb. 12.* the beſt Witneſſes of Traditions, yet were infinitely deceived in their account, ſince ſometimes they gueſt at them and conjectured by way of Rule and Diſcourſe, and not of their knowledge, not by evidence of the thing; ſince many are called Traditions which were not ſo, many are uncertain whether they were or no, yet confidently pretended; and this uncertainty which at firſt was great enough, is increaſed by infinite cauſes and accidents in the ſucceſſion of 1600 years; ſince the Church hath been either ſo careleſs or ſo abuſed that ſhe could not, or would not preſerve Traditions with carefulneſs and truth; ſince it was ordinary for the old Writers to ſet out their own fancies, and the Rites of their Church which had been Ancient under the ſpecious Title of Apoſtolic Traditions; ſince ſome Traditions rely but upon ſingle Teſtimony at firſt, and yet deſcending upon others, come to be atteſted by many, whoſe Teſtimony though con-junct, yet in value is but ſingle, becauſe it relies upon the firſt ſingle Relator, and ſo can have no greater authority, or certainty, than they derive from the ſingle Perſon; ſince the firſt Ages who were moſt competent to conſign Tradition, yet did conſign ſuch Traditions as be of a nature wholly diſcrepant from the preſent Questions, and ſpeak nothing at all or very imperfectly to our purpoſes; and the following Ages are no fit Witneſſes of that which was not tranſmitted to them, becauſe they could not know it at all, but by ſuch tranſmiſſion and prior conſignation; ſince what at firſt was a Tradition, came afterwards to be written, and ſo ceaſed its being a Tradition; yet the credit of Traditions

commenc'd upon the certainty and reputation of thoſe truths firſt delivered by a word, afterward conſigned by writing; ſince what was certainly Tradition Apoſtolicall, as many Rituals were, are rejected by the Church in ſeveral Ages, and are gone out into a deſuetude; and laſtly, ſince, beſide the no neceſſity of Traditions, there being abundantly enough in Scripture, there are many things called Traditions by the Fathers which they themſelves either proved by no Authors, or by Apochryphal and Spurious and Heretical, the matter of Tradition will in very much be ſo uncertain, ſo falſe, ſo ſuſpicious, ſo contradictory, ſo improbable, ſo unproved, that if a Queſtion be conteſted and be offered to be proved only by Tradition, it will be very hard to impoſe ſuch a propoſition to the belief of all Men with any imperiouſneſs or reſolved determination, but it will be neceſſary Men ſhould preſerve the liberty of believing and propheſying, and not part with it, upon a worſe merchandize and exchange than *Eſau* made for his birth-right.

S E C T. VI.

*Of the uncertainty and insufficiency of Councils
Eccleſiaſtical to the ſame purpoſe.*

Numb. 1.

BUT ſince we are all this while in uncertainty, it is neceſſary that we ſhould addreſs our ſelves ſomewhere, where we may reſt the ſole of our Foot: And Nature, Scripture and Experience teach the World in matters of Queſtion to ſubmit to ſome final ſentence. For it is not

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reason that controversies should continue till the erring person shall be willing to condemn himself: and the Spirit of God hath directed us by that great precedent at *Jerusalem*, to address our selves to the Church, that in a plenary Council and Assembly, she may synodically determine Controversies. So that if a General Council have determin'd a Question, or expounded Scripture, we may no more disbelieve the Decree, than the Spirit of God himself who speaks in them. And indeed, if all Assemblies of Bishops were like that first, and all Bishops were of the same Spirit of which the Apostles were, I should obey their Decree with the same Religion as I do them whose Preface was *Visum est Spiritui Sancto & nobis*: And I doubt not but our blessed Saviour intended that the Assemblies of the Church should be judges of Controversies, and Guides of our persuasions in matters of difficulty. But he also intended they should proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and those precedents which he had made authentick by the immediate assistance of his holy Spirit: He hath done his part, but we do not do ours. And if any private Person in the simplicity and purity of his Souls desires to find out a truth of which he is in search and inquiry, if he prays for Wisdom, we have a promise he shall be heard and answered liberally, and therefore much more, when the representatives of the Catholick Church do meet, because every Person there hath *in individuo* a title to the promise, and another title as he is a governour and a guide of Souls, and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, especially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with simplicity and purity; so that

that there is no diſputing againſt the pretence and promiſes, and Authority of General Councils. For if any one Man can hope to be guided by Gods Spirit in the ſearch, the pious and impartial and unprejudicate ſearch of Truth, then much more may a General Council. If no private Man can hope for it, then truth is not neceſſary to be found, nor we are not oblig'd to ſearch for it, or elſe we are ſaved by chance: But if private Men can by vertue of a promiſe, upon certain conditions be aſſured of finding out ſufficient Truth, much more ſhall a General Council. So that I conſider thus: There are many promiſes pretended to belong to General Aſſemblies in the Church; but I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they ſhall be abſolutely aſſiſted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: Faith is a vertue as well as Charity, and therefore conſiſts in liberty and choice, and hath nothing in it of neceſſity: There is no Queſtion but that they are obliged to proceed according to ſome rule; for they expect no aſſiſtance by way of *Enthuſiaſm*; if they ſhould, I know no warrant for that, neither did any General Council ever offer a Decree which they did not think ſufficiently prov'd by Scripture, Reaſon, or Tradition, as appears in the Acts of the Councils; Now then, if they be tyed to conditions, it is their duty to obſerve them; but whether it be certain that they will obſerve them, that they will do all their duty, that they will not ſin even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that's the conſideration. So that if any Man queſtions the Title and Authority of General Councils, and whether or no great promiſes appertain to them, I ſuppoſe him to be

much mistaken; but he also that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reason, and that none of them were deceived, because possibly they might have been truly directed, is a stranger to the History of the Church, and to the perpetual instances and experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous saying of *St. Gregory* that he had the four first Councils in esteem and veneration next to the four Evangelists; I suppose it was because he did believe them to have proceeded according to Rule, and to have judged righteous judgement; but why had not he the same opinion of other Councils too which were celebrated before his death, for he lived after the fifth General? not because they had not the same Authority; for that which is warrant for one is warrant for all; but because he was not so confident that they did their duty nor proceeded so without interest as the first four had done, and the following Councils did never get that reputation which all the Catholick Church acknowledged due to the first four. And in the next Order were the three following generals; for the Greeks and Latins did never joyntly acknowledge but seven generals to have been authentick in any sense, because they were in no sense agreed that any more than seven had proceeded regularly and done their duty: So that now the Question is not whether General Councils have a promise that the holy Ghost will assist them; for every private Man hath that promise, that if he does his duty he shall be assisted sufficiently in order to that end to which he needs assistance; and therefore much more shall General Councils in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need assistance, that

that is, in order to the conſervation of the Faith, for the doctrinal rules of good life, and all that concerns the eſſential duty of a Chriſtian, but not in deciding Queſtions to ſatisſie contentious or curious or preſumptuous Spirits. But now can the Biſhops ſo conven'd be factious, can they be abuſed with prejudice, or transported with intereſts, can they reſiſt the holy Ghoſt, can they extinguiſh the Spirit, can they ſtop their ears, and ſerve themſelves upon the holy Spirit and the pretence of his aſſiſtances, and ceaſe to ſerve him upon themſelves, by captivating their underſtandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it neceſſary they ſhould perform any condition? is there any one duty for them to perform in theſe Aſſemblies, a duty which they have power to do or not do? If ſo, then they may fail of it, and not do their duty. And if the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit be conditional, then we have no more aſſurance that they are aſſiſted, than that they do their duty and do not ſin.

Numb. 2. Now let us ſuppoſe what this duty is: Certainly, if the Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, muſt come to it by ſuch means which are ſpiritual and holy diſpoſitions, in order to a holy and ſpiritual end. They muſt be ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace, that is, they muſt have peaceable and docible diſpoſitions, nothing with them that is violent, and reſolute to encounter thoſe gentle and ſweet aſſiſtances: and the Rule they are to follow, is the Rule which the holy Spirit hath conſign'd to the Catholick Church, that is the holy Scripture, either * intirely or at leaſt for the greater part of the Rule: So that now if

* *Vid. Optat. Milev. lib. 5. adv. Parm. Baldwin in eundem. & S. Auguſt. in Pf. Expof. 2.*

the Biſhops be factious and prepoſſeſt with perſuaſions depending upon intereſt, it is certain they may judge amiſs; and if they recede from the Rule, it is certain they do judge amiſs: And this I ſay upon their grounds who moſt advance the authority of General Councils: For if a General Council may err if a Pope confirm it not, then moſt certainly if in any thing it recede from Scripture it does alſo err; becauſe that they are to expect the Popes confirmation they offer to prove from Scripture: Now if the Pope's confirmation be required by authority of Scripture, and that therefore the default of it does evacuate the Authority of the Council, then alſo are the Councils Decrees invalid, if they recede from any other part of Scripture; So that Scripture is the Rule they are to follow, and a Man would have thought it had been needleſs to have proved it, but that we are fallen into Ages in which no truth is certain, no reaſon concluding, nor is there any thing that can convince ſome Men. For *Scapleton* with extreme boldneſs againſt the piety of Chriſten- dom, againſt the publick ſenſe of the ancient Church, and the praſtiſe of all pious Aſſemblies of Biſhops affirms the Decrees of a Council to be binding, *etiamſi non confirmetur ne probabili ſimonio Scripturarum*; nay, though it be quite *extra Scripturam*, but all wiſe and good Men have ever ſaid that ſenſe which *St. Hilary* expreſſed in theſe words, *Quæ extra Evangelii ſunt non defendam*; This was it which the good Emperour *Constantine* propounded to the Fathers met at *Nice*, *libri Evangelici, oracula Apoſtolorum, & veterum Prophetarum clarè nos conſtruunt quid ſentiendum in Divinis*, and this is

*Relat. con-
rov. 4. q. 1.
d. 3.*

*L. 2. ad Con-
ſtant.*

*Apud Theo-
dor. l. 1. c. 7.*

con-

Concord. Ca-
thol. L. 2. C. 10.

confessed by a ſober Man of the Roman Church
it ſelf, the Cardinal of *Cuſa*, *Oportet quod om-
nia talia qua legere debent, contineantur in Au-
thoritatibus ſacrarum Scripturarum*: Now then
all the advantage I ſhall take from hence; is
this, that if the Apoſtles commended them
who examined their Sermons by their confor-
mity to the Law and the Prophets, and the
Men of *Berea* were accounted noble for ſearching
the Scriptures whether thoſe things which they
taught were ſo or no; I ſuppoſe it will not be
denied, but the Councils Decrees, may alſo
be tryed whether they be conform to Scripture
yea or no; and although no Man can take cog-
niſance and judge the Decrees of a Council
pro Autoritate publicâ, yet *pro informatione pri-
vatâ* they may; the Authority of a Council is
not greater than the Authority of the Apo-
ſtles, nor their dictates more ſacred or authen-
tick. Now then put caſe a Council ſhould re-
cede from Scripture; whether or no were we
bound to believe its Decrees? only ask the
Queſtion: For it were hard to be bound to
believe what to our underſtandings ſeems con-
trary to that which we know to be the Word
of God: But if we may lawfully recede from
the Councils Decrees, in caſe they be contrari-
ant to Scripture, it is all that I require in this
Queſtion. For if they be tyed to a Rule, then
they are to be examined and underſtood accor-
ding to the Rule, and then we are to give our
ſelves that liberty of judgment which is requi-
ſite to diſtinguiſh us from beaſts, and to put us
into a capacity of reaſonable people, following
reaſonable guides. But how-ever if it be cer-
tain that the Councils are to follow Scripture,
then if it be notorious that they do recede from
Scripture,

Scripture we are fure we must obey God rather than Men, and then we are well enough. For unless we are bound to shut our Eyes, and not to look upon the Sun, if we may give our selves liberty to believe what seems most plain, and unless the Authority of a Council be so great a prejudice as to make us to do violence to our understanding, so as not to disbelieve the Decree, because it seems contrary to Scripture, but to believe it agrees with Scripture, though we know not how, therefore because the Council hath decreed it, unless I say we be bound in duty to be so obediently blind, and sottish, we are fure that there are some Councils which are pretended General, that have retired from the publick notorious words and sense of Scripture. For what wit of Man can reconcile the Decree of the thirteenth Session of the Council of *Constance* with Scripture, in which Session the half Communion was decreed, in defiance of Scripture, and with a *non obstante* to Christs institution. For in the Preface of the Decree, Christs institution and the practice of the Primitive Church is expressed, and then with a *non obstante*, Communion in one kind is establisht. Now then suppose the *non obstante* in the form of words relates to the Primitive practice; yet since Christs institution was taken notice of in the first words of the Decree, and the Decree made quite contrary to it, let the *non obstante* relate whither it will, the Decree (not to call it a defiance) is a plain recession from the institution of Christ, and therefore the *non obstante* will refer to that without any sensible error; and indeed for all the excuses to the contrary, the Decree was not so discreetly fram'd, but that in the very form

form of words, the defiance and the *non obſtante* is too plainly relative to the firſt words. For what ſenſe can there be in the firſt *licet* elſe? *licet Chriſtus in utraque ſpecie*, and *licet Eccleſia Primitiva*, &c. *tamen hoc non obſtante*, &c. the firſt *licet* being a relative term, as well as the ſecond *licet*, muſt be bounded with ſome cor-
 reſpondent. But it matters not much; let them whom it concerns enjoy the benefit of all excu-
 ſes they can imagine, it is certain Chriſts inſti-
 tution and the Councils ſanction are as contra-
 ry as light and darkneſs. Is it poſſible for any
 Man to contrive a way to make the Decree of
 the Council of *Trent*, commanding the publick
 Offices of the Church to be in Latin, friends
 with the fourteenth Chapter of the *Corinthians*?
 It is not amiſs to obſerve how the Hyperaſtiſts
 of that Council ſweat to answer the Allegations
 of *St. Paul*, and the wiſeſt of them do it ſo ex-
 tremely poor, that it proclaims to all the
 World that the ſtrongeſt Man that is, cannot
 eat Iron or ſwallow a Rock. Now then, would
 it not be an unſpeakable Tyranny to all wiſe Per-
 ſons, (who as much hate to have their Souls
 enſlaved as their Bodies imprifoned) to com-
 mand them to believe that theſe Decrees are a-
 greeable to the Word of God? Upon whoſe
 underſtanding ſoever theſe are impoſed, they
 may at the next Seſſion reconcile them to a
 crime, and make any ſin ſacred, or perſuade
 him to believe propoſitions contradictory to a
 Mathematical demonſtration. All the arguments
 in the World that can be brought to prove the
 infallibility of Councils, cannot make it ſo cer-
 tain that they are infallible, as theſe two inſtances
 do prove infallibly that theſe were deceived, and
 if ever we may ſafely make uſe of our reaſon and
 conſider

consider whether Councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reason be more assured, that they have or have not, than we have in these particulars: so that either our reason is of no manner of use, in the discussion of this Question, and the thing it self is not at all to be disputed, or if it be, we are certain that these actually were deceived, and we must never hope for a clearer evidence in any dispute. And if these be, others might have been, if they did as these did, that is, depart from their Rule. And it was wisely said of *Cusanus*: *Notandum est experimento rerum universale Concilium posse deficere*:

L. 2. c. 14. Concord. Cathol.

The experience of it is notorious, that Councils have erred: And all the Arguments against experience are but plain sophistry.

And therefore I make no scruple to slight *Numb. 3.*

the Decrees of such Councils, wherein the proceedings were as prejudicate and unreasonable, as in the Council wherein *Abailardus* was condemned, where the presidents having pronounced *Damnamus*, they at the lower end being awaked at the noise, heard the latter part of it, and concurred as far as *Mnamus* went, and that was as good as *Damnamus*, for if they had been awake at the pronouncing the whole word, they would have given sentence accordingly. But

this means *St. Bernard* numbred the major part of voices against his Adversary *Abailardus*: And as far as these men did do their duty, the majority of Priests and Judges, and wise men; so may presume them to be assisted: But no further. But I am content this (because but a private Assembly) shall pass for no instance: But what shall we say of all the Arrian Councils celebrated with so great fancy, and such numerous Assemblies? we all say that they erred. And

Epist. Abailardi ad Heliss. conjugem.

* *Confessio*, l. 2.
cap. 25. *Con-*
cord.

it will not be ſufficient to ſay they were not lawful Councils: For they were conven'd by that Authority which all the world knows did at that time convocate Councils, and by which (as it is * confelſed and is notorious) the firſt eight Generals did meet, that is by the Authority of the Emperour all were called, and as many and more did come to them, than came to the moſt famous Council of *Nice*: So that the Councils were lawful, and if they did not proceed lawfully, and therefore did err, this is to ſay that Councils are then not deceiv'd, when they do their duty, when they judge impartially, when they decline intereſt, when they follow their Rule; but this ſays alſo that it is not infallibly certain that they will do ſo; for theſe did not, and therefore the others may be deceiv'd as well as theſe were. But another thing is in the wind; for Councils not confirmed by the Pope have no warrant that they ſhall not err, and they not being confirmed, therefore fail'd. But whether is the Popes confirmation after the Decree or before? It cannot be ſuppoſed before for there is nothing to be confirmed till the Decree be made, and the Article compoſed. But if it be after, then poſſibly the Popes Decree may be requiſite in ſolemnity of Law, and to make the Authority popular, publick and humane; but the Decree is true or falſe before the Popes confirmation, and is not at all altered by the ſupervening Decree, which being poſterior to the Decree, alters not what went before. *Nunquam enim creſcit ex poſt facto præteriti affirmatio*, is the voice both of Law and Reason. So that it cannot make it divine, and neceſſary to be heartily believed. It may make it lawful, not make it true, that is, it may poſſibly

by ſuch means become a Law but not a truth. I ſpeak now upon ſuppoſition the Popes confirmation were neceſſary, and requir'd to the making of conciliary and neceſſary ſanctions. But if it were, the caſe were very hard: For ſuppoſe a heresy ſhould invade, and poſſeſs the Chair of *Rome*, what remedy can the Church have in that caſe, if a General Council be of no Authority without the Pope confirm it? will the Pope confirm a Council againſt himſelf; will he condemn his own heresy? That the Pope may be a Heretick appears in the * Canon Law, which ſays he may for heresy be depoſed, and therefore by a Council which in this caſe hath plenary Authority without the Pope. And therefore in the Synod at *Rome* held under Pope *Adrian* the Second, the Censure of the Sixth Synod againſt *Honorius* who was convicted of heresy, is approved with this Appendix, that in this caſe the caſe of heresy, *minores poſſint de majoribus judicare*: And therefore if a Pope were above a Council, yet when the Queſtion is concerning heresy, the caſe is altered; the Pope may be judg'd by his inferiours, who in this caſe which is the main caſe of all, become his Superiours. And it is little better than impudence to pretend that all Councils were confirmed by the Pope, or that there is a neceſſity in reſpect of divine obligation, that they ſhould be confirmed by him, more than by any other of the Patriarchs. For the Council of *Chalcedon* it ſelf one of thoſe four which *St. Gregory* did revere next to the four Evangelists, was rejected by Pope *Leo*, who in his 53 Epistle to *Anatolius*, and in his 54 to *Marrian*, and in his 55 to *Pulcheria*, accuses it of ambition and conſiderate temerity, and therefore no fit

* *Dist. 40.*
Can. ſi Papa.

*De laicis, l. 3.
c. 20. §. ad hoc
uls.*

*Evag. lib. 3.
cap. 30.*

Assembly for the habitation of the holy Spirit, and *Gelaſius* in his Tome *de vinculo Anathematis*, affirms that the Council is in part to be receiv'd, in part to be rejected, and compares it to heretical Books of a mixt matter, and proves his assertion by the place of *St. Paul*, *Omnia probate, quod bonum eſt retinete*. And *Bellarmino* ſays the ſame; *In Concilio Chalcedonenſi quedam ſunt bona, quedam mala, quedam recipienda, quedam rejicienda; ita & in libris hereticorum*, and if any thing be falſe, then all is Queſtionable, and judicable and diſcernable, and not infallible antecedently. And however, that Council hath *ex poſt facto*, and by the voluntary conſenting of after Ages obtained great reputation; yet they that lived immediately after it, that obſerved all the circumſtances of the thing, and the diſabilities of the perſons, and the uncertainty of the truth of its decrees, by reaſon of the uncludingneſs of the Arguments brought to attelt it, were of another mind, *Quod autem ad Concilium Chalcedonenſe attinet, illud id temporis (viz. Anaſtaſii Imp.) neque palam in Eccleſiis ſanctiſſimis predicatum fuit, neque ab omnibus rejectum, nam ſinguli Eccleſiarum preſides pro ſuo arbitratu in ea re egerunt*. And ſo did all men in the world that were not maſter'd with prejudices and undone in their underſtanding with accidental impertinencies; they judg'd upon thoſe grounds which they had and ſaw, and ſuffered not themſelves to be bound to the imperious dictates of other men, who are as uncertain in their determinations as other in their Queſtions. And it is an evidence that there is ſome deception, and notable error either in the thing or in the manner of their proceeding, when the Decrees of a Council ſhall have no authority from the Com-

pillers,

piters, nor no ſtrength from the reaſonableneſs of the deciſion, but from the accidental approbation of Poſterity: And if Poſterity had pleaſed, *Origen* had believed well and been an Orthodox perſon. And it was pretty ſport to ſee that *Papias* was right for two Ages together, and wrong ever ſince; and juſt ſo it was in Councils, particularly in this of *Chalcedon*, that had a fate alterable according to the Age, and according to the Climate, which to my underſtanding is nothing elſe but an Argument that the buſineſs of infallibility is a later device, and commenc'd to ſerve ſuch ends as cannot be juſtified by true and ſubſtantial grounds, and that the Pope ſhould confirm it as of neceſſity, is a fit cover for the ſame diſh.

In the ſixth General Council, *Honorius* Pope Numb. 4. of *Rome* was condemned; did that Council ſtay for the Popes Confirmation before they ſent forth their Decree? Certainly they did not think it ſo needful, as that they would have ſuſpended or caſſated the Decree, in caſe the Pope had then diſavowed it: For beſides the condemnation of Pope *Honorius* for hereſy, the 13th and 55th Canons of that Council are expreſſly againſt the cuſtom of the Church of *Rome*. But this particular is involved in that new Queſtion, whether the Pope be above a Council. Now ſince the Conteſtation of this Queſtion, there was never any free or lawful Council that determined for the Pope, it is not likely any ſhould, and is it likely that any Pope will confirm a Council that does not? For the Council of *Baſil* is therefore condemn'd by the laſt Lateran which was an Aſſembly in the Popes own Palace, and the Council of *Conſtance* is of no value in this Queſtion, and ſlighted in a

*Vid. poſtea de
Concil. Sinues-
ſiano. §. 6. N. 9.*

Epist. 16 2^{ad}
Glorium.

just proportion, as that Article is disbelieved. But I will not much trouble the Question with a long consideration of this particular; the pretence is senseless and illiterate, against reason and experience, and already determin'd by St. Austin sufficiently as to this particular, *Ecce putamus illos Episcopos qui Roma judicaverunt non bonos judices fuisse, Restabat adhuc plenarium Ecclesie universale Concilium ubi etiam cum ipsis iudicibus causa possit agitari, ut si male judicasse convicti essent, eorum sententia solverentur.* For since Popes may be parties, may be Simoniacks, Schismaticks, Hereticks, it is against reason that in their own causes, they should be judges, or that in any causes they should be superior to their judges. And as it is against reason, so is it against all experience too; for the Council *Sinuessanum* (as it said) was conven'd to take Cognisance of Pope *Marcellinus*; and divers Councils were held at *Rome* to give judgment in the causes of *Damasus*, *Sixtus* the III. *Symmachus*, and *Leo* III. and IV. as is to be seen in *Platina*, and the *Tomes* of the Councils. And it is no answer to this and the like allegations to say in matters of fact and humane constitution, the Pope may be judg'd by a Council, but in matters of Faith all the world must stand to the Popes determination and authoritative decision: For if the Pope can by any colour pretend to any thing, it is to a supreme Judicature in matters Ecclesiastical, positive and of fact; and if he fails in this pretence, he will hardly hold up his head for any thing else; for the ancient Bishops deriv'd their Faith from the fountain, and held that in the highest tenure, even from Christ their Head; but by reason of the Imperial * City it became the principal

* *Uldo Concil.*
Chalced. 28.
15.

principal Seat, and he surpriz'd the highest Judicature, partly by the concession of others, partly by his own accidental advantages, and yet even in these things although he was *major singulis*, yet he was *minor universis*: And this is no more than what was decreed of the eighth General Synod; which if it be sense, is pertinent to this Question; for General Councils are appointed to take Cognizance, of Questions and differences about the Bishop of Rome, *non tamen audacter in eum ferre sententiam*: By *audacter*, as is supposed, is meant *precipitanter* hastily and unreasonably; but if to give sentence against him be wholly forbidden, it is non-sense, for to what purpose is an Authority of taking Cognizance, if they have no power of giving sentence, unless it were to defer it to a superiour Judge, which in this case cannot be supposed? For either the Pope himself is to judge his own cause after their examination of him, or the General Council is to judge him: So that although the Council is by that Decree enjoyn'd to proceed modestly and warily, yet they may proceed to sentence, or else the Decree is ridiculous and impertinent.

But to clear all, I will instance in matters of Question and opinion: For not only some Councils have made their Decrees without or against the Pope, but some Councils have had the Popes confirmation, and yet have not been the more legitimate or obligatory, but are known to be heretical. For the Canons of the sixth Synod although some of them were made against the Popes, and the custom of the Church of Rome, a Pope a while after did confirm the Council, and yet the Canons are impious and heretical, and so esteem'd by the

Numb. 5.

Church of *Rome* her self. 1 instance in the second Canon which approves of that Synod of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* for rebaptization of Hereticks, and the 72. Canon that dissolves marriage between persons of differing persuasion in matters of Christian Religion; and yet these Canons were approved by Pope *Adrian I.* who in his Epistle to *Tharastus*, which is in the second action of the seventh Synod, calls them *Canones divine & legaliter predicatos*. And these Canons were used by Pope *Nicholas I.* in his Epistle *ad Michaellem*, and by *Innocent III.* *c. à multis. extra. de etat. ordinandorum*: So that now (that we may apply this) there are seven General Councils which by the Church of *Rome* are condemn'd of error. The * Coun-

*Vid. *Scera.*
l. 2. c. 5. &
Sozomen. l. 3.
c. 5.

cil of *Antioch*, *A. D.* 345. in which *St. Athanasius* was condemn'd: The Council of *Milain* *A. D.* 354. of above 300 Bishops: The Council of *Ariminum*, consisting of 600 Bishops: The second Council of *Ephesus*, *A. D.* 449. in which the *Eutychian* heresy was confirmed, and the Patriarch *Flavianus* kill'd by the faction of *Dioscorus*: The Council of *Constantinople* under *Leo Isaurus*, *A. D.* 730: And another at *Constantinople* 35 years after: And lastly, the Council at *Pisa* 134 years since. Now that these General Councils are condemn'd, is a sufficient Argument that Councils may err; and it is no answer to say they were not confirm'd by the Pope; for the Popes confirmation I have shewn not to be necessary, or if it were, yet even that also is an Argument that General Councils may become invalid, either by their own fault, or by some extrinsecal supervening accident, either of which evacuates their Authority; and whether all that is required to

Gregor. in Ro.
gik. l. 3. caus. 7.
ait. Concilium
Numidia er-
rassé. Concili-
um Aquis-
grani erravit.
De raptore &
raptà dist. 20.
can. de libellis,
in glossa.

the legitimation of a Council, was actually obſerved in any Council, is ſo hard to determine, that no man can be infallibly ſure that ſuch a Council is authentick and ſufficient probation.

2. And that is the ſecond thing I ſhall obſerve, There are ſo many Questions concerning the efficient, the form, the matter of General Councils, and their manner of proceeding, and their final ſanction, that after a Question is determin'd by a Conciliary Aſſembly, there are perhaps twenty more Questions to be diſputed before we can with confidence either believe the Council upon its meer Authority, or obtrude it upon others. And upon this ground, how eaſy it is to elude the preſſure of an Argument drawn from the Authority of a General Council, is very remarkable in the Question about the Popes or the Councils Superiority, which Question although it be defin'd for the Council againſt the Pope by five General Councils, the Council of *Florence*, of *Conſtance*, of *Baſil*, of *Piſa*, and one of the *Lateran's*, yet the Jeſuits to this day, account this Question *pro non definitâ*, and have rare pretences for their eſcape; as firſt, It is true a Council is above a Pope, in caſe there be no Pope, or he uncertain; which is *Bellarmino's* answer, never conſidering whether he ſpoke ſenſe or no, nor yet remembering that the Council of *Baſil* depoſed *Eugenius* who was a true Pope and ſo acknowledg'd. Secondly, ſometimes the Pope did not confirm theſe Councils, that's their Answer: (And although it was an exception that the Fathers never thought of, when they were preſſed with the Authority of the Council of *Ariminum* or *Syrmiun*, or any other *Arrian* Convention;) yet the Council of *Baſil* was conven'd

Numb. 6.

1.

2.

- conven'd by Pope *Martin V.* then, in its ſixteenth Seſſion, declar'd by *Eugenius* the IV. to be lawfully continued and confirmed expreſſy in ſome of its Decrees by Pope *Nicholas*, and ſtood till it was at laſt rejected by *Leo X.* very many years after; but that came too late, and with too viſible an intereſt; and this Council did decree *fide Catholicâ tenendum Concilium eſſe ſupra Papam*: But if one Pope confirms it, and another rejects it, as it happened in this caſe and in many more, does it not deſtroy the competency of the Authority? and we ſee it by this inſtance, that it ſo ſerves the turns of men, that it is good in ſome caſes, that is, when it makes for them, and invalid when it makes againſt them. Thirdly, but it is a little more ridiculous in the caſe of the Council of *Conſtance*, whoſe decrees were confirm'd by *Martin V.* But that this may be no Argument againſt them, *Bellarmino* tells you he only confirmed thoſe things *qua facta fuerant Conciliaritèr, re diligenter examinâtâ*, of which there being no mark, nor any certain Rule to judge it, it is a device that may evacuate any thing we have a mind to, it was not done *Conciliaritèr*; that is, not according to our mind; for *Conciliaritèr* is a fine new nothing, that may ſignifie what you pleaſe.
4. Fourthly, but other devices yet more pretty they have: As, whether the Council of *Lateran* was a General Council or no, they know not, (no nor will not know) which is a wiſe and plain reſervation of their own advantages, to make it General or not General, as ſhall ſerve their turns. Fifthly, as for the Council of *Florence*, they are not ſure, whether it hath defin'd the Queſtion *ſatis apertè*; *apertè* they will grant, if you will allow them not *ſatis apertè*.

Sixthly

Sixthly and laſtly, the Council of *Piſa* is *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*, which is the greateſt folly of all and moſt prodigious vanity; ſo that by ſomething or other, either they were not conven'd lawfully, or they did not proceed *Conſiliariter*, or 'tis not certain that the Council was General or no, or whether the Council were *approbatum*, or *reprobatum*, or elſe it is *confirmatum partim reprobatum*, or elſe it is *neque approbatum neque reprobatum*; By one of theſe ways or a device like to theſe, all Councils and all Decrees ſhall be made to ſignifie nothing, and to have no Authority.

6.
Bellar. de
conc. l. r. c. 8

3. There is no General Council that hath determined that a General Council is infallible: No Scripture hath recorded it; no Tradition univerſal hath transmitted to us any ſuch propoſition; So that we muſt receive the Authority at a lower rate, and upon a leſs probability than the things conſigned by that Authority. And it is ſtrange that the Decrees of Councils ſhould be eſteemed authentick and infallible, and yet it is not infallibly certain, that the Councils themſelves are infallible, becauſe the chief of the Councils infallibility is not proved to us by any medium, but ſuch as may deceive us.

Numb. 7.

4. But the beſt inſtance that Councils are not infallible and may all be deceived, is the contradiction of one Council to another; for in that caſe both cannot be true, and which of them is true, muſt belong to another judgment, which is leſs than the ſolemnity of a General Council; and the determination of this matter can be of no greater certainty after it is concluded, than when it was propounded as a Queſtion, being it to be determined by the ſame Authority or by

Numb. 8.

by a leſs than it ſelf. But for this allegation,
Seſſ. 25. we cannot want inſtances; The Council of *Trent*
 allows picturing of God the Father; The Council
Aſſ. 2. of *Nice* altogether diſallows it; The ſame
Can. 82. *Nicene* Council, which was the ſeventh General,
 allows of picturing Chriſt in the form of a
 Lamb; But the ſixth Synod by no means will
 endure it, as *Caranza* affirms: The Council
 of *Neocaſarea* confirmed by *Leo IV.* diſt. 20.
de libellis, and approved by the firſt *Nicene*
 Council as it is ſaid in the ſeventh Seſſion of
 the Council of *Florence*, forbids ſecond Marriages,
 and impoſes Penances on them that are married
 the ſecond time, forbidding Priests to be preſent
 at ſuch Marriage Feaſts: Beſides, that this is
 expreſſly againſt the Doctrin of *St. Paul*, it is
Cap. 1. alſo againſt the Doctrin of the Council of *Laodicea*
 which took off ſuch Penances, and pronounced
 ſecond Marriages to be free and lawful: Nothing
 is more diſcrepant than the third Council of
Carthage and the Council of *Laodicea*, about
 aſſignation of the Canon of Scripture, and yet
 the ſixth General Synod approves both: And I
 would fain know if all General Councils are of
 the ſame mind with the Fathers of the Council
 of *Carthage*, who reckon into the Canon five
 Books of *Solomon*. I am ſure *St. Auſtin* reckoned
 but three, and I think all Chriſtendom beſide
 are of the ſame opinion. And if we look into
 the title of the Law *de Conciliis*, called
Concordantia discordantium, we ſhall find
 inſtances enough to confirm that the Decrees
 of ſome Councils are contradictory to others,
 and that no wit can reconcile them: And
 whether they did or no, that they might diſagree,
 and former Councils be corrected by later,
 was the belief of the Doctors in

L. 17. de cul.
 Dei. c. 20.

in those Ages in which the best and most famous Councils were conven'd, as appears in that famous saying of St. *Austin* speaking concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks; and how much the *Africans* were deceived in that Question, he answers the Alligation of the Bishops Letters, and those National Councils which confirmed St. *Cyprian's* opinion by saying that they were no final determination. For *Episcoporum literæ emendari possunt à Conciliis nationalibus, Concilia nationalia à plenariis, ipsaque plenaria priora à posterioribus emendari.* Not only the occasion of the Question being a matter not of fact, but of Faith, as being instanc'd in the Question of rebaptization: but also the very fabrick and æconomy of the words, put by all the answers of those men who think themselves pressed with the Authority of St. *Austin*. For as National Councils may correct the Bishops Letters, and General Councils may correct National, so the later General may correct the former, that is, have contrary and better Degrees of manners, and better determinations in matters of Faith. And from hence hath risen the Question whether is to be received the former or the later Councils, in case they contradict each other. The former are nearer the mountains Apostolical, the later are of greater consideration; The first, have more Authority, the later more reason; The first are more venerable, the later more inquisitive and seeing. And now what rule shall we have to determine our beliefs, whether to Authority, or Reason, the Reason and the Authority both of them not being the highest in their kind, both of them being repudiable, and at most but probable? And here it is that this great uncertainty is such
as

I. 2. de Conc.
c. 8. *Responden-*
deo in primis.

* *Ibid.* § de
Concilio au-
tem.
Dist. 20. *Cam-*
Domino San-
cto.

as not to determine any body, but fit to serve every body; and it is sport to see that *Bellarmino* will by all means have the Council of *Carthage* prefer'd before the Council of *Laodicea*, because it is later, and yet he prefers the second *Nicene* * Council before the Council of *Frankfurt*, because it is elder: *St. Austin* would have the former Generals to be mended by the later, but *Isidore* in *Gratian* says when Councils do differ *standum esse antiquioribus*, the elder must carry it: And indeed these probables are buskins to serve every foot, and they are like *magnum & parvum*, they have nothing of their own, all that they have is in comparison of others; so these topicks have nothing of resolute and dogmatical truth, but in relation to such ends as an interested person hath a mind to serve upon them.

Numb. 9.

5. There are many Councils corrupted, and many pretended and alledged, when there were no such things, both which make the topick of the Authority of Councils to be little and inconsiderable: There is a Council brought to light in the edition of Councils by *Binius*, viz. *Sinuessanum*, pretended to be kept in the year 303, but it was so private till then, that we find no mention of it in any ancient Record: Neither *Eusebius*, nor *Ruffinus*, *St. Hierom*, nor *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, nor *Theodoret*, nor *Enstapius*, nor *Bede* knew any thing of it, and the eldest allegation of it is by Pope *Nicholas I.* in the ninth Century. And he that shall consider that 300 Bishops in the midst of horrid Persecutions (for so then they were) are pretended to have conven'd, will need no greater Argument to suspect the imposture; besides, he that was the framer of the engine did not lay his ends together

hand-

handfomly, for it is said that the deposition of *Marcellinus* by the Synod was told to *Diocletian*, when he was in the *Persian* War, when as it is known before that time he had return'd to *Rome*, and triumph'd for his *Persian* Conquest as *Eusebins* in his Chronicle reports: And this is so plain that *Binius* and *Baronius* pretend the Text to be corrupted, and to go to * mend it by such an emendation as is a plain contradiction to the sense, and that so un-clerk-like, viz. by putting in two words and leaving out one, which whether it may be allowed them by any licence less than Poetical let Criticks judge. *St. Gregory* saith that the *Constantinopolitans* had corrupted the Synod of *Chalcedon*, and that he suspected the same concerning the *Ephesine* Council: And in the fifth Synod there was a notorious prevarication, for there were false Epistles of Pope *Vigilius* and *Menna* the Patriarch of *Constantinople* inserted, and so they passed for authentick till they were discovered in the sixth General Synod, Actions the 12. and 14. And not only false Decrees and Actions may creep into the Codes of Councils; but sometimes the authority of a learned man may abuse the Church with pretended Decrees, of which there is no Copy or shadow in the Code it self: And thus *Thomas Aquinas* says that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was reckoned in the Canon by the *Nicene* Council, no shadow of which appears in those Copies we now have of it; and this pretence and the reputation of the man prevail'd so far with *Melchior Canus* the learned Bishop of *Canaries*, that he believed it upon this ground, *Vir sanctus rem adeo gravem non arueret, nisi compertum habuisset*; and there are many things which have prevailed upon less reason

*Pro Canon
esset in libro
Persarum* lo-
gi valant *com-
reversus esset e
helle Persa-
rum* *Euseb.
Chronicon vi-
de Binius in
notis ad Con-
cil. Sinceda-
num, Tom. I.
Concil. &
Baron. An-
nal. Tom. 3.
A. D. 303.
num. 107.*

*L. 5. Ep. 24.
ad Nazian.*

*Comment. in
Hebr.*

• *Con. Carthag.*
VI. cap. 9.

† *Con. Afri-*
can.

¶ *Ibid. c. 102.*
c. 133.

• *Lib. I. Eccl.*
Hiſt. c. 6.

† *In princ.*
Con. de Synod.
Princ.

¶ *Baronius,*
Tom. 3. A. D.
325. n. 156.
Tom. 3. ad
A. D. 325. n.
62, 63.

• *Panopl. l. 2.*
c. 6.

reason and a more ſlight Authority. And that very Council of *Nice*, hath not only been pretended by *Aquinas*, but very much abuſed by others, and its Authority and great reputation hath made it more lyable to the fraud and pretences of idle people: For whereas the *Nicene* Fathers made but twenty Canons, for ſo many and no more were received by * *Cecilian* of *Carthage*, that was at *Nice* in the Council; by St. † *Auſtin*, and 200 *African* Biſhops with him, by St. ¶ *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, by * *Atticus* of *Conſtantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, † *Iſidore* and *Theodoret*, as ¶ *Baronius* witneſſes, yet there are fourſcore lately found out in an *Arabian* M. S. and publiſhed in Latin by *Turrian* and *Alfonſus* of *Piſa* Jeſuits ſurely, and like to be maſters of the mint. And not only the Canons, but the very Acts of the *Nicene* Council are falſe and ſpurious, and are ſo confeſſed by *Baronius*; though how he and * *Lindanus* will be reconcil'd upon the point, I neither know well nor much care. Now if one Council be corrupted, we ſee by the inſtance of St. *Gregory*, that another may be ſuſpected and ſo all; becauſe he found the Council of *Chalcedon* corrupted, he ſuſpected alſo the *Ephesine*, and another might have ſuſpected more, for the *Nicene* was tampered foully with, and ſo three of the four Generals were ſullied and made ſuſpicious, and therefore we could not be ſecure of any; If falſe Acts be inſerted in one Council, who can truſt the actions of any, unleſs he had the keeping the Records himſelf, or durſt ſwear for the Register: And if a very learned man (as *Thomas Aquinas* was,) did either wilfully deceive us, or was himſelf ignorantly abuſed in Allegation of a Canon which was not, it is but a very

very fallible Topick at the beſt, and the moſt holy man that is, may be abuſed himſelf, and the wiſeſt may deceive others.

6. And laſtly, To all this and to the former *Numb. 10;* inſtances, by way of Corollary, I add ſome more particulars in which it is notorious that Councils General, and National, that is, ſuch as were either General by Original, or by adoption into the Canon of the Catholick Church did err, and were actually deceived. The firſt Council of Toledo admits to the Communion him that hath a Concubine, ſo he have no wife beſides, and this Council is approved by Pope *Leo* in the 92 Epistle to *Ruficus* Biſhop of *Narbona*: *Gratian* *Dist. 34. can. omnibus.* ſays that the Council means by a Concubine, a wife married *ſine dote & ſolemnitate*; but this is ſtanding with untempered mortar. For though it was a cuſtom amongſt the Jews to diſtinguiſh Wives from their Concubines by Dowry and legal Solemnities, yet the Chriſtian diſtinguiſhed them no otherwiſe, than as lawful and unlawful, than as Chaſtity and Fornication: And beſides, if by a Concubine is meant a lawful Wife without a Dowry, to what purpoſe ſhould the Council make a Law that ſuch a one ſhould be admitted to the Communion? for I ſuppoſe it was never thought to be a Law of Chriſtianity that a man ſhould have a Portion with his Wife, nor he that married a poor Virgin ſhould deſerve to be Excommunicate. So that *Gratian* and his Followers are preſt ſo with this Canon, that to avoid the impiety of it, they expound it to a ſignification without ſenſe or purpoſe. But the buſineſs then was, that Adultery was ſo publick and notorious a practice that the Council did chuſe rather to condempn ſimple Fornication, than by ſuch per-

M

miſſion

Cap. 3.

• Part 3. q. 80.
a. 6. ad 3 m.

† Can. 72.

|| Can. ego
Berengay. de
conſecrat. diſt.
2.

Lib. 2. c. 8.
de Concil.

miſſion of a leſs, they might ſlacken, the publick cuſtom of a greater, juſt as at *Rome* they permit Stews to prevent unnatural ſins; but that by a publick ſanction Fornicators, habitually and notoriously ſuch, ſhould be admitted to the holy Communion was an act of Priests, ſo unfit for Priests, that no excuſe can make it white or clean. The Council of *Wormes* does authorize a ſuperſtitious cuſtom at that time too much uſed, of diſcovering ſtolen goods by the holy Sacrament, which * *Aquinas* juſtly condemns for Superſtition. The † ſixth Synod ſeparates perſons lawfully married upon an accuſation and crime of hereſy: The Roman Council under || Pope *Nicholas* II. defined that not only the Sacrament of Chriſts body, but the very body it ſelf of our bleſſed Saviour is handled and broke by the hands of the Priest, and chewed by the teeth of the Communicants, which is a manifeſt error derogatory from the truth of Chriſts beatifical reſurrection, and glorification in the Heavens, and diſavowed by the Church of *Rome* it ſelf; But *Bellarmino* that answers all the Arguments in the world, whether it be poſſible or not poſſible, would ſain make the matter fair, and the Decree tolerable, for ſays he, the Decree means that the body is broken not in it ſelf but in the ſign, and yet the Decree ſays that not only the Sacrament (which if any thing be, is certainly the ſign) but the very body it ſelf is broken and champ'd with hands and teeth reſpectively; which indeed was nothing but a plain over-acting the Article in contradiction to *Berengarius*. And the answer of *Bellarmino* is not ſenſible for he denies that the body it ſelf is broken in it ſelf (that was the error we charg'd upon the Roman

Roman Synod) and the ſign abſtracting from the body is not broken, (for that was the opinion that Council condemn'd in *Berengarius*) but ſays *Bellarmino*, the body in the ſign: What's that? for neither the ſign, nor the body, nor both together are broken: For if either of them diſtinctly, they either ruſh upon the error which the Roman Synod condemn'd in *Berengarius*, or upon that which they would fain excuſe in Pope *Nicholas*; but if both are broken then 'tis true to affirm it of either, and then the Council is blaſphemous in ſaying that Chriſt's glorified body is paſſible and frangible by natural manducation: So that it is and it is not, it is not this way, and yet it is no way elſe, but it is ſome way, and they know not how, and the Council ſpoke blaſphemy, but it muſt be made innocent; and therefore, it was requiſite a cloud of a diſtinction ſhould be raiſed, that the unwary Reader might be amuſed, and the Decree ſcape untouched; but the truth is, they that undertake to juſtify all that other men ſay, muſt be more ſubtle than they that ſaid it, and muſt uſe ſuch diſtinctions which poſſibly the firſt Authors did not underſtand. But I will multiply no more inſtances, for what inſtance ſoever I ſhall bring, ſome or other will be answering it, which thing is ſo far from ſatisfying me in the particulars, that it increaſes the difficulty in the general, and ſatisfies me in my firſt belief: For * if no Decrees of Councils can make againſt them though they ſeem never ſo plain againſt them, when let others be allowed the ſame liberty, and there is all the reaſon in the world they ſhould) and no Decree ſhall conclude againſt any Doctrine, that they have already entered in: and by this means the Church is no

* Illa demum
eius videntur
edicta & Con-
cilia qua in
rem ſuam fa-
ciunt; reliqua
non plaris aſſi-
mant quanta
conventum
muliercula-
rum in tex-
trina vel ther-
m's. Lud.
Vives in
Scholiis lib.
20. Aug. de
Civ. Dei
c. 25.

fitter instrument to Decree Controversies than the Scripture it self, there being as much obscurity and disputing in the sense, and the manner, and the degree, and the competency, and the obligation of the Decree of a Council, as of a place of Scripture. And what are we the nearer for a Decree, if any Sophister shall think his elusion enough to contest against the Authority of a Council? yet this they do, that pretend highest for their Authority, which consideration or some like it might possibly make *Gratian* prefer *St. Hierom's* single Testimony before a whole Council, because he had Scripture of his side; which says, that the Authority of Councils is not *authoritas*, and that Councils may possibly recede from their Rule, from Scripture; and in that case, a single person proceeding according to Rule is a better Argument; which indeed was the saying of

36. q. 2. c.
placuit.

Part. I. de e-
lection. Et e-
lect. potest. cap.
significasti.

Panormitan, in concernentibus fidem etiam dictum unius privati esset dicto Papæ aut totius Concilio præferendum, si ille moveretur melioribus Argumentis.

Numb. II.

Athanas. lib. de Synod. Frustra igitur circumcursitantes prætexunt ob fidem se Synodos consulare, cum sit Divina Scriptura omnibus potentior.

I end this Discourse with representing the words of *Gregory Nazianzen* in his Epistle to *Procopius*; *Ego si vera scribere oportet ita animi affectus sum, ut omnia Episcoporum Concilia fugiam, quoniam nullius Concilii finem latum faustumque vidi, nec quod depulsionem malorum potius quam accessionem & incrementum habuerit*: But I will not be so severe and dogmatical against them: For I believe many Councils to have been called with sufficient Authority, to have been managed with singular piety and prudence and to have been finished with admirable success and truth. And where we find such Councils he that will not with all veneration believe their

Decrees

Decrees, and receive their ſanctions, underſtands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our Souls, whoſe *faith we are* Heb. 13. 7. *bound to follow* (ſaith St. Paul) that is ſo long as they follow Chriſt, and certainly many Councils have done ſo : But this was then when the publick intereſt of Chriſtendom was better conſerv'd in determining a true Article, than in finding a diſcreet temper, or a wiſe expedient to ſatisſie diſagreeing perſons ; (As the Fathers did at Trent did, and the *Lutherans* and *Calviniſts* did at *Sandomir* in *Polonia* ; and the *Sublapſarians* and *Supralapſarians* did at *Dort* :) It was in Ages when the ſum of Religion did not conſiſt in maintaining the *Grandezza* of the Papacy ; where there was no order of men with a fourth Vow upon them to advance St. Peter's Chair ; when there was no man, nor any company of men, that eſteem'd themſelves infallible, and therefore they ſearched for truth as if they meant to find it, and would believe it if they could ſee it prov'd, not reſolv'd to prove it becauſe they had upon chance or intereſt believ'd it ; then they had rather have ſpoken a truth, then upheld their reputation, but only in order to truth. This was done ſometimes, and when it was done, God's Spirit never fail'd them, but gave them ſuch aſſiſtances as were ſufficient to that good end for which they were Aſſembled, and did implore his aid : And therefore it is that the four general Councils ſo called by way of eminency have gained ſo great a reputation above all others, not becauſe they had a better promiſe, or more ſpecial aſſiſtances, but becauſe they proceeded better according to the Rule, with leſs faction, without ambition and temporal ends.

Numb. 12.

And yet thoſe very Aſſemblies of Biſhops had no Authority by their Decrees to make a Divine Faith, or to conſtitute new objects of neceſſary Credence; they made nothing true that was not ſo before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent Guides, and whoſe Decrees are moſt certainly to determine all thoſe who have no Argument to the contrary of greater force and efficacy than the Authority or Reaſons of the Council. And there is a duty owing to every Pariſh-Prieſt, and to every Dioceſan Biſhop; theſe are appointed over us and to answer for our Souls, and are therefore morally to guide us, as reaſonable Creatures are to be guided, that is, by reaſon and diſcourſe: For in things of judgment and underſtanding, they are but in form next above Beaſts, that are to be ruled by the imperiouſneſs and abſoluteneſs of Authority, unleſs the Authority be Divine, that is, infallible. Now then in a juſter height, but ſtill in its true proportion, Aſſemblies of Biſhops are to guide us with a higher Authority, becauſe in reaſon it is ſuppoſed they will do it better, with more Argument and certainty, and with Decrees, which have the advantage by being the reſults of many diſcourſes of very wiſe and good men: But that the Authority of general Councils, was never eſteem'd abſolute, infallible and unlimited, appears in this, that before they were obliging, it was neceſſary that each particular Church reſpectively ſhould accept them, *Con-*
currente univerſali totius Eccleſiæ conſenſu, &c.
in declaratione veritatum quæ credenda ſunt, &c.
 That's the way of making the Decrees of Councils become authentick, and be turn'd into a Law as *Gerson* obſerves; and till they did, their
 Decrees

Vid S. Auguſt.
l. i. c. 18. de
bapt. contr.
Donat.

Decrees were but a dead letter (and therefore it is that these later Popes have so laboured, that the Council of *Trent* should be received in *France*; and *Carolus Molineus* a great Lawyer, and of the Roman Communion disputed * against the reception,) and this is a known constitution in the Canon Law, but it proves plainly that the Decrees of Councils have their Authority from the voluntary submission of the particular Churches, not from the prime sanction and constitution of the Council. And there is great reason it should; for as the representative body of the Church derives all power from the diffusive body which is represented, so it resolves into it, and though it may have all the legal power, yet it hath not all the natural; for more able men may be unsent, than sent; and they who are sent may be wrought upon by stratagem, which cannot happen to the whole diffusive Church; it is therefore most fit that since the legal power, that is, the external was passed over to the body representative, yet the efficacy of it, and the internal should so still remain in the diffusive, as to have power to consider whether their representatives did their duty yea or no, and so to proceed accordingly: For unless it be in matters of justice, in which the interest of a third person is concerned, no man will or can be supposed to pass away power from himself of doing himself right, in matters personal, proper, and of so high concernment: It is most unnatural and unreasonable. But besides, that they are excellent instruments of peace, the best humane mediators in the world, rare Sermons for determining a point in Controversie, and

* So did the third Estate of *France* in the Convention of the three Estates under *Lewis* the 13th earnestly contend against it.

the greateſt probability from humane Authority, beſides theſe advantages (I ſay) I know nothing greater that General Councils can pretend to with reaſon and Argument ſufficient to ſatiſfie any wiſe man: And as there was never any Council ſo general, but it might have been more general; for in reſpect of the whole Church, even *Nice* it ſelf was but a ſmall Aſſembly; ſo there is no Decree ſo well conſtituted, but it may be proved by an Argument higher than the Authority of the Council: And therefore general Councils, and National, and Provincial, and Dioceſan in their ſeveral degrees, are excellent Guides for the Prophets and directions and inſtructions for their Propheſyings, but not of Weight and Authority to reſtrain their Liberty ſo wholly, but that they may diſſent when they ſee a reaſon ſtrong enough ſo to perſuade them, as to be willing upon the confidence of that reaſon and their own ſincerity, to answer to God for ſuch their modeſty, and peaceable, but (as they believe) their neceſſary diſagreeing.

S E C T. VII,

Of the fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his Expounding Scripture, and reſolving Questions.

BUT ſince the Question between the Council and the Pope grew high, they have not wanted abettors ſo confident on the Popes behalf, as to believe General Councils to be nothing but Pumps and Solennities of the Catholic Church, and that all the Authority of determining Controverſies is formally and effectually in the Pope. And therefore to appeal from the Pope to a future Council is a hereſy, yea, and Treason too ſaid Pope *Pius II*, and therefore it concerns us now to be wiſe and wary. But before I proceed, I muſt needs remember that Pope *Pius II*, while he was the wiſe and learned *Aeneas Sylvius*, was very confident for the preheminance of a Council, and gave a merry reaſon why more Clerks were for the Popes than the Council, though the truth was on the other ſide, even becauſe the Pope gives Biſhopricks and Abbeys, but Councils give none; and yet as ſoon as he was made Pope, as if he had been inſpired, his Eyes were open to ſee the great privileges of *St. Peter's Chair*, which before he could not ſee, being amused with the truth, or elſe with the reputation of a General Council. But however, there are many that hope to make it good, that the Pope is the Univerſal and the infallible Doctor, that he breaths Decrees as Oracles, that to diſſent from any of his Cathedral determinations is abſolute hereſy, the Rule

Numb. 1.

Epist. ad Norimberg.

Patrum et avorum nostrorum tempore pauci audebant dicere Papam esse supra Concil. l. i. de gestis Concil. Basil.

Rule of Faith being nothing else but conformity to the Chair of *Peter*. So that here we have met a restraint of Prophecy indeed; but yet to make amends, I hope we shall have an infallible Guide, and when a Man is in Heaven, he will never complain that his choice is taken from him, and he is confin'd to love and to admire, since his love and his admiration is fixt, upon that which makes him happy, even upon God himself. And in the Church of *Rome* there is in a lower degree, but in a true proportion as little cause to be troubled, that we are confin'd to believe just so, and no choice left us for our understandings to discover or our wills to chuse, because though we be limited, yet we are pointed out where we ought to rest, we are confin'd to our Center, and there where our understandings will be satisfied, and therefore will be quiet, and where after all our strivings, studies and endeavours we desire to come, that is, to truth, for there we are secur'd to find it, because we have a Guide that is infallible: If this prove true, we are well enough. But if it be false or uncertain, it were better we had still kept our liberty, than be cozened out of it with gay pretences. This then we must consider.

Numb. 2.

And here we shall be oppressed with a cloud of Witnesses: For what more plain than the Commission given to *Peter*? *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church. And to thee will I give the Keys. And again, for thee have I prayed that thy faith fail not; but thou when thou art converted confirm thy brethren; And again, If thou lovest me feed my sheep:* Now nothing of this being spoken to any of the other Apostles, by one of these places. *St. Peter* must needs be appointed Foundation or Head of the

the Church, and by conſequence he is to rule and govern all. By ſome other of theſe places he is made the ſupreme Paſtor, and he is to teach and determine all, and enabled with an infallible power ſo to do: And in a right underſtanding of theſe Authorities, the Fathers ſpake great things of the Chair of *Peter*; for we are as much bound to believe that all this was ſpoken to *Peter's* Succeſſors, as to his Perſon; that muſt by all means be ſuppoſed, and ſo did the old Doctors who had as much certainty of it, as we have, and no more; but yet let us hear what they have ſaid, * *To this Church by reaſon of its more powerful principality, it is neceſſary all Churches round about ſhould Convene: In this, Tradition Apoſtolicall always was obſerved, and therefore to communicate with this Biſhop, with this Church, was to be in Communion with the Church Catholick:* To this Church error or perfidiouſneſs cannot have acceſs: * *Againſt this See the gates of Hell cannot prevail:* † *For we know this Church to be built upon a Rock: And whoever eats the Lamb not within this Houſe, is prophane; he that is in the Ark of Noah periſhes in the inundation of waters. He that gathers not with this Biſhop he ſcatters; and he that belongeth not to Chriſt, muſt needs belong to Antichriſt. And that's his final Sentence: But if you would have all this prov'd by an infallible Argument, || *Optatus of Milevis* ¶ *L. 2. contra Armenian.* ¶ *Africa ſupplies it to us from the very name of Peter: For therefore Chriſt give him the cognomination of Cephas ἀπὸ τοῦ κεφαλῆς, to ſhew that St. Peter was the viſible Head of the Catholick Church. Dignum patellâ operculum!* This long ſermon muſt needs be full of tragedy to all them that take liberty to themſelves to follow Scripture and their beſt Guides, if it happens in*

* *Irena. contr. hereſ. l. 3. c. 3.*

† *Ambr. de obitu Salyri. c. 1. l. 1. Ep. 4. ad Imp. Cypr. Ep. 52.*

|| *Cypr. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.*

* *S. Auſtin. in Pſal. contra part. Donat.*

† *Hieron. Ep. 57. ad Damasum.*

in that liberty that they depart from the persuasions or the Communion of *Rome*: But indeed, if with the peace of the Bishops of *Rome*, I may say it, this Scene is the most unhandfomely laid, and the worst carried of any of those pretences that have lately abused Christendom.

Numb. 3.

1. Against the Allegations of Scripture, I shall lay no greater prejudice than this, that if a person dis-interested should see them, and consider what the products of them might possibly be, the last thing that he would think of, would be how that any of these places should serve the ends or pretences of the Church of *Rome*: For to instance in one of the particulars, that man had need have a strong fancy who imagines, that because Christ pray'd for St. Peter, that (being he had design'd him to be one of those upon whose preaching and Doctrine he did mean to constitute a Church) *that his faith might not fail*, (for it was necessary that no bitterness or stopping, should be in one of the first springs, least the current be either spoil'd or obstructed) that therefore the faith of Pope *Alexander VI.* or *Gregory*, or *Clement* 1500 years after, should be preserved by vertue of that Prayer, which the form of words, the time, the occasion, the manner of the address, the effect it self, and all the circumstances of the action and person did determine to be personal: and when it was more than personal, St. Peter did not represent his Successors at *Rome*, but the whole Catholick Church, says *Aquinas* and the Divines of the University of *Paris*, *Volunt enim pro solâ Ecclesiâ esse oratum*, says *Bellarmino* of them, and the gloss upon the Canon Law plainly denies the effect of this Prayer at all to appertain to the Pope:

22 a. q. 2. a. 6.
ar. 6. ad 3 m.

L. 4. de Rom.
Pont. c. 3. §. 1.

Quare

Quare de quâ Ecclesia intelligas quod hoc dicitur
non possit errare, si de ipso Papâ qui Ecclesia Caus. 21. cap. à recta. q. 1.
dicitur? sed certum est quod Papa errare potest

Respondet ipsa Congregatio fidelium hic dicitur Ec- 29. dist. Ana-
clesia, & talis Ecclesia non potest non esse, nam ip- statius. 60. d. si Papa.

Dominus orat pro Ecclesiâ, & voluntate labiorum
eorum non fraudabitur. But there is a little dan-

ger in this Argument when we well consider it;
 that it is likely to redound on the head of those
 whose turns it should serve: For it may be re-
 membered that for all this prayer of Christ for
 St. Peter, the good man fell foully, and denied
 his Master shamefully: And shall Christs prayer
 be of greater efficacy for his Successors, for
 whom it was made but indirectly and by conse-
 quence, than for himself, for whom it was di-
 rectly and in the first intention? And if not,
 then for all this Argument, the Popes may deny
 Christ as well as their chief and Deccessor Peter.
 But it would not be forgotten how the Roman
 Doctors will by no means allow that St. Peter
 was then the chief Bishop or Pope, when he de-
 nied his Master. But then much less was he
 chosen chief Bishop when the prayer was made
 for him, because the prayer was made before his
 fall; that is, before that time in which it is con-
 sidered, he was not as yet made Pope: And how
 then the whole Succession of the Papacy should
 be intituled to it, passes the length of my hand
 to span. But then also if it be supposed and al-
 lowed, that these words shall intail infallibility
 upon the Chair of Rome, why shall not also all
 the Apostolical Sees be infallible as well as
 Rome? why shall not Constantinople or Byzan-
 tium where St. Andrew sate? why shall not E-
 phesus where St. John sate? or Jerusalem where
 St. James sate? for Christ prayed for them all,

nt

ut pater ſanctificaret eos ſua veritate, Joh. 17.
 Numb. 4. 2. For [*tibi dabo claves,*] was it perſonal or not? If it were, then the Biſhops of *Rome* have nothing to do with it: If it were not, then by what Argument will it be made evident that *St. Peter*, in the promiſe represented only his Succeſſors, and not the whole College of Apoſtles, and the whole Hierarchy? For if *St. Peter* was chief of the Apoſtles, and Head of the Church, he might fair enough be the representative of the whole College, and receive it in their right as well as his own; which alſo is certain that it was ſo, for the ſame promiſe of binding and looſing, (which certainly was all that the Keys were given for) was made afterward to all the Apoſtles, *Mat. 18.* and the power of remitting and retaining which in reaſon and according to the ſtile of the Church is the ſame thing in other words, was actually given to all the Apoſtles, and unleſs that was the performing the firſt and ſecond promiſe, we find it not recorded in Scripture how or when or whether yet or no, the promiſe be performed: That promiſe I ſay which did not pertain to *Peter* principally and by origination, and to the reſt by Communication, ſociety and adherence, but that promiſe which was made to *Peter* firſt, but not for himſelf, but for all the College, and for all their Succeſſors, and then made the ſecond time to them all, without representation, but in diffuſion, and perform'd to all alike in preſence except *St. Thomas*. And if he went to *St. Peter* to derive it from him, I know not; I find no record for that, but that Chriſt convey'd the promiſe to him by the ſame Commiſſion, the Church yet never doubted, nor had ſhe any reaſon. But this matter is too notorious: I ſay

no more to it, but repeat the words and Argument of St. *Auſtin*, *Si hoc Petro tantum dic- Tra. 50. in Joann.*
tu eſt, non facit hoc Eccleſia: If the Keys were only given and ſo promiſed to St. *Peter*, that the Church hath not the Keys, then the Church can neither bind nor looſe, remit nor retain, which God forbid; if any man ſhould endeavour to answer this Argument, I leave him and *Auſtin* to conteſt it.

3. For *paſce oves* there is little in that Alle- Numb. 5.
 tion, beſides the boldneſs of the Objectors; were not all the Apoſtles bound to feed Chriſt's ſheep? had they not all the Commiſſion from Chriſt, and Chriſt's Spirit immediately; *Paul* had certainly; did not St. *Peter* himſelf go to all the Biſhops of *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappa-*
cia, *Asia*, and *Bithinia*; that they ſhould feed the Flock of God, and the great Biſhop and Shepherd ſhould give them an immarceſcible Crown; plainly implying, that from whence they derived their Authority, from him they were ſure of a reward: In purſuance of which *Cyprian* laid his Argument upon this baſis,
cum ſtatutum ſit omnibus nobis, &c. & ſin- Lib. 1. Ep. 3.
is paſtoribus portio gregis, &c. Did not St. *Paul* go to the Biſhops of *Ephesus* to feed the Flock of God, of which the holy Ghoſt hath made them Biſhops or Overſeers? and that this very Com-
 miſſion was ſpoken to *Peter* not in a perſonal, but a publick capacity, and in him ſpoke to all the Apoſtles we ſee attested by St. *Auſtin*, and *Ambroſe* and generally by all Antiquity; and *De agone Chriſti*, c. 30.
 ſo concern'd even every Prieſt that *Dama-*
 ſus was willing enough to have St. *Hierom* ex-
 cate many queſtions for him. And *Liberius* Epist. ad A-
 writes an Epiſtle to *Athanaſius* with much mo- thanaſ. apud
 ſty requiring his advice in a Queſtion of Faith, *Athanaſ. tom.*
 I. p. 42.
 Pariſ.

ἵνα καὶ ὁ προσιδὼς δὲ ἀδιακρίτως, πρὸς ὧν ἀξιοῖς καλεῖται παρὰ

That I alſo may be perſuaded without all doubting of thoſe things which you ſhall be pleaſed to command me. Now *Liberius* needed not to have troubled himſelf to have writ into the Eaſt to *Athanaſius*; for if he had but ſeated himſelf in his Chair, and made the dictate, the reſult of his pen and ink would certainly have taught him and all the Church; but that the good Pope was ignorant that either *paſce oves* was his own Charter, and Prerogative, or that any other words of Scripture had made him to be infallible, or if he was not ignorant of it, he did very ill to complement himſelf out of it. So did all thoſe Biſhops of *Rome* that in that troubleſome and unprofitable Queſtion of Eaſter, being unſatisfied in the ſupputation of the *Egyptians* and the definitions of the Mathematical Biſhop of *Alexandria*, did yet require and intreat *St. Ambroſe* to tell them his opinion, as he himſelf witneſſes; If *paſce oves* belongs only to the Pope by primary title, in theſe caſes the ſheep came to feed the Shepherd, which though it was well enough in the thing, is very ill for the pretensions of the Roman Biſhops; and if we conſider how little many of the Popes have done toward feeding the Sheep of Chriſt, we ſhall hardly determine which is the greater prevarication that the Pope ſhould claim the whole Commiſſion to be granted to him, or that the execution of the Commiſſion ſhould be wholly paſſed over to others; and it may be there is a myſtery in it, that ſince *St. Peter* ſent a Biſhop with his ſtaff to raiſe up a Diſciple of his from the dead who was afterwards Biſhop of *Triers* the Popes of *Rome* never wear a Paſtoral ſtaff except it be in that Dioceſs (ſays *Aquinas*) for great reaſon

L. 10. Ep. 83.

that he who does not do the office, ſhould not bear the Symbol; but a man would think that the Popes Maſter of the Ceremonies was ill adviſed not to aſſign a Paſtoral Staff to him, who pretends the Commiſſion of *paſce oves* to belong to him by prime right, and origination. But this is not a buſineſs to be merry in.

But the great ſupport is expected from *Tu es* Numb. 6.

Super hanc Petram edificabo Eccleſiam,

Now there being ſo great difference in the poſition of theſe words, by perſons diſ-interpreted, who, if any, might be allowed to judge of this Queſtion, it is certain that neither one nor other can be obtruded for an Article of Faith, much leſs as a Catholicon inſtead of it, by conſtituting an Authority which ſhould guide us in all Faith, and determine us in all Queſtions: For if the Church was not built upon the perſon of *Peter*, then his Succeſſors can challenge nothing from this inſtance; now that it was the confeſſion of *Peter* upon which the Church waſto ſtand for ever, we have witneſſes very credible, St. Ignatius, † St. Baſil, || St. Hilary, * St. Gre-
gory Nyſſen, † St. Gregory the Great, || St. Auſtin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, † Iſidore Peluſiot, and

M. 4. Sent. diſt. 24.

Ad Philadelph.

† *Selenus. orat. 25.*

|| *L. 6. de Trin.*

* *De Trin. ad- verſ. Judæos.*

† *L. 3. Ep. 33.*

|| *In 1. Eph. Ioan. tr. 10.*

* *De Trin. l. 4.*

† *L. 1. Ep. 235.*

very many more. And although all theſe witneſſes concurring cannot make a propoſition to be true, yet they are ſufficient witneſſes, that it is not the Universal belief of Chriſtendom that the Church was built upon St. *Peters* perſon. Cardinal Perron hath a fine fancy to elude this variety of Expoſition, and the conſequents of it; (ſaith he) theſe Expoſitions are not contrary exclusive of each other, but inclusive and conſequent to each other: For the Church is founded cauſally upon the confeſſion of St. *Peter*, formally upon the miniſtry of his perſon, and this

N

was

was a reward or a conſequent of the former: So that theſe Expoſitions are both true, but they are conjoyn'd as mediate and immediate, direct and collateral, literal and moral, original and perpetual, acceſſory and temporal, the one conſign'd at the beginning, the other introduc'd upon occaſion: For before the ſpring of the *Arrian* hereſy, the Fathers expounded theſe words of the perſon of *Peter*; but after the *Arrians* troubled them, the Fathers finding great Authority, and *Energy* in this confeſſion of *Peter* for the eſtabliſhment of the natural filiation of the Son of God, to advance the reputation of theſe words and the force of the Argument, gave themſelves licence to expound theſe words to the preſent advantage, and to make the confeſſion of *Peter* to be the foundation of the Church, that if the *Arrians* ſhould encounter this Authority, they might with more prejudice to their perſons declaim againſt their cauſe by ſaying they overthrew the foundation of the Church. Beſides that this answer does much diſhonour the reputation of the Father's integrity, and makes their interpretations leſs credible as being made not of knowledge or reaſon, but of neceſſity and to ſerve a preſent turn, it is alſo falſe: For * *Ignatius* expounds it in a ſpiritual ſenſe, which alſo the Liturgy attributed to St. *James* calls *ἐν πίστεϊ καὶ ἡρώεσσι*: And *Origen* expounds it myſtically to a third purpoſe, but excluſively, to this: And all theſe were before the *Arrian* Controverſy. But if it be lawful to make ſuch unproved obſervations, it would have been to better purpoſe, and more reaſon to have obſerved it thus: The Fathers ſo long as the Biſhop of *Rome* kept himſelf to the limits preſcrib'd him by Chriſt, and indulged to him by the

• *Epist. ad Philadelph.*
In c. 16. *Mat. tract. 1.*

the conſtitution or conceſſion of the Church, were unwary and apt to expound this place of the perſon of *Peter*; but when the Church began to enlarge her phylacteries by the favour of Princes, and the Sun-ſhine of a prosperous fortune, and the Pope by the advantage of the Imperial Seat, and other accidents began to invade upon the other Biſhops and Patriarchs, then that he might have no colour from Scripture for ſuch new pretenſions, they did moſt generally turn the ſtream of their expoſitions from the perſon to the conſeſſion of *Peter*, and declared that to be the foundation of the Church. And thus I have reſiſted fancy with fancy; but for the main point, that theſe two Expoſitions are incluſive of each other, I find no warrant; for though they may conſiſt together well enough, if Chriſt had ſo intended them; yet unleſs it could be ſhown by ſome circumſtance of the Text, or ſome other extrinſical Argument that they muſt be ſo, and that both ſenſes were actually intended, it is but *gratis dictum* and a begging of the Queſtion, to ſay that they are ſo, and the fancy ſo new, that when St. *Auſtin* had expounded this place of the perſon of *Peter*, he reviews it again, and in his Retractions leaves every man to his liberty, which to take; as having nothing certain in this Article: which had been altogether needleſs if he had believed them to be incluſively in each other, neither of them had need to have been retracted: both were alike true, both of them might have been believed: But I ſaid the fancy was new, and I had reaſon; for it was unknown till yeſterday, that even the late Writers of his own ſide, expound the words of the conſeſſion of St. *Peter* excluſively to his perſon or any thing elſe, as is to be ſeen in

* *Defenſ. pacis*
part. 2. c. 28.

† *Recommend.*
ſacr. Script.

* *Marſilius*, † *Petrus de Aliaco* and the gloſs upon *Diſt. 19. can. ita Dominus*, § *ut ſupra*, which alſo was the interpretation of *Phavorinus* *Camers* their own Biſhop, from whom they learnt the reſemblance of the word Πέλες and πέλες, of which they have made ſo many gay diſcourſes, πέλες. περί τῶν πάντων ἀρχαῶν κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριſτοῦ εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ δευτέρῳ ἀντι-
δεμελιζόμενῃ.

Numb. 7.

5. But upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from ſo great and numerous Teſtimony of Fathers, I am willing to believe that it was not the confeſſion of St. *Peter*, but his perſon upon which Chriſt ſaid he would build his Church, or that theſe Expositions are conſiſtent with and conſequent to each other, that this confeſſion was the objective foundation of Faith, and Chriſt and his Apoſtles the ſubjective, Chriſt principally, and St. *Peter* inſtrumentally; and yet I underſtand not any advantage will hence accrue to the See of *Rome*: For upon St. *Peter* it was built, but not alone, for it was upon the foundation of the Apoſtles, and Prophets; Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone; and when St. *Paul* reckoned the Oeconomy of Hierarchy, he reckons not *Peter* firſt, and then the Apoſtles. But firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, &c. And whatſoever is firſt, either is before all things elſe, or at leaſt nothing is before it: So that at leaſt St. *Peter* is not before all the reſt of the Apoſtles, which alſo St. *Paul* expreſſly averrs, *I am in nothing inferiour to the very chiefest of the Apoſtles*, no not in the very being a Rock and a Foundation; and it was of the Church of *Ephesus*, that St. *Paul* ſaid in particular it was *columna & firmamentum veritatis*, that Church was, not excluding others, for they

they alſo were as much as ſhe; for ſo we keep cloſe and be united to the corner ſtone, although ſome be maſter builders, yet all may build, and we have known whole Nations converted by Lay-Men and Women, who have been builders ſo far as to bring them to the corner ſtone.

Vid. Socrat. l. 1. c. 19. 20. Sozom. l. 2. c. 14. Niceph. l. 14. c. 40.

6. But ſuppoſe all theſe things concern St. *Peter* in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the Biſhops of *Rome* to do with this? For how will it appear that theſe promiſes and Commiſſions did relate to him as a particular Biſhop, and not as a publick Apoſtle? Since this latter is ſo much the more likely, becauſe the great pretence of all ſeems in reaſon more proportionable to the founding of a Church, than its continuance: And yet if they did relate to him as a particular Biſhop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty) yet why ſhall St. *Clement* or *Linus* rather ſucceed in this great office of headſhip than St. *John* or any of the Apoſtles that ſurvived *Peter*: It is no way likely a private perſon ſhould ſkip over the head of an Apoſtle: or why ſhall his Succeſſors at *Rome* more enjoy the benefit of it than his Succeſſors at *Antioch*, ſince that he was at *Antioch* and preached there, we have a Divine Authority, but that he did ſo at *Rome* at moſt we have but a humane; and if it be replied that becauſe he dyed at *Rome*, it was Argument enough that there his Succeſſors were to inherit his privilege, this beſides that at moſt it is but one little degree of probability, and ſo not of ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport an Article of Faith; it makes that the great Divine Right of *Rome*, and the Apoſtolical preſidency was ſo contingent and fallible as to depend upon

* *Defens. pacis*
part. 2. c. 28.

† *Recommend.*
sacr. Script.

* *Marsilius*, † *Petrus de Aliaco* and the gloss upon *Dist. 19. can. ita Dominus*, § *ut supra*, which also was the interpretation of *Phavorinus Camers* their own Bishop, from whom they learnt the resemblance of the word *Πέλες* and *πέλες*, of which they have made so many gay discourses, *πέλες* *περιὰ ὅτι πῶς ἀρραγῆς κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ θεμελίῳ θεο-θεμελιωμένη.*

Numb. 7.

5. But upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from so great and numerous Testimony of Fathers, I am willing to believe that it was not the confession of St. *Peter*, but his person upon which Christ said he would build his Church, or that these Expositions are consistent with and consequent to each other, that this confession was the objective foundation of Faith, and Christ and his Apostles the subjective, Christ principally, and St. *Peter* instrumentally; and yet I understand not any advantage will hence accrue to the See of *Rome*: For upon St. *Peter* it was built, but not alone, for it was upon the foundation of the Apostles, and Prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; and when St. *Paul* reckoned the Oeconomy of Hierarchy, he reckons not *Peter* first, and then the Apostles. But first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, &c. And whatsoever is first, either is before all things else, or at least nothing is before it: So that at least St. *Peter* is not before all the rest of the Apostles, which also St. *Paul* expressly avers, *I am in nothing inferior to the very chiefest of the Apostles*, no not in the very being a Rock and a Foundation; and it was of the Church of *Ephesus*, that St. *Paul* said in particular it was *columna & firmamentum veritatis*, that Church was, not excluding others, for they

they alſo were as much as ſhe; for ſo we keep cloſe and be united to the corner ſtone, although ſome be maſter builders, yet all may build, and we have known whole Nations converted by Lay-Men and Women, who have been builders ſo far as to bring them to the corner ſtone.

6. But ſuppoſe all theſe things concern St. Peter in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the Biſhops of Rome to do with this? For how will it appear that theſe promiſes and Commiſſions did relate to him as a particular Biſhop, and not as a publick Apoſtle? Since this latter is ſo much the more likely, becauſe the great pretence of all ſeems in reaſon more proportionable to the founding of a Church, than its continuance: And yet if they did relate to him as a particular Biſhop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty) yet why ſhall St. Clement or Linus rather ſucceed in this great office of headſhip than St. John or any of the Apoſtles that ſurvived Peter: It is no way likely a private perſon ſhould ſkip over the head of an Apoſtle: or why ſhall his Succeſſors at Rome more enjoy the benefit of it than his Succeſſors at Antioch, ſince that he was at Antioch and preached there, we have a Divine Authority, but that he did ſo at Rome at moſt we have but a humane; and if it be replied that becauſe he dyed at Rome, it was Argument enough that there his Succeſſors were to inherit his privilege, this beſides that at moſt it is but one little degree of probability, and ſo not of ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport an Article of Faith; it makes that the great Divine Right of Rome, and the Apoſtolical preſidency was ſo contingent and fallible as to depend upon

Vid. Camera-
conf. Qu. ve-
ſpert.

the decree of *Nero*; and if he had ſent him to *Antioch* there to have ſuffered Martyrdom, the Biſhops of that Town had been Heads of the Catholick Church. And this thing preſſes the harder, becauſe it is held by no mean perſons in the Church of *Rome*, that the Biſhoprick of *Rome* and the Papacy are things ſeparable: And the Pope may quit that See and ſit in another, which to my underſtanding is an Argument, that he that ſucceeded *Peter* at *Antioch*, is as much ſupream by Divine Right as he that ſits at *Rome*; both alike, that is, neither by Divine Ordinance: For if the Roman Biſhops by Chriſt's intention were to be Head of the Church, then by the ſame intention, the Succeſſion muſt be continued in that See, and then let the Pope go whither he will, the Biſhop of *Rome* muſt be the Head, which they themſelves deny, and the Pope himſelf did not believe, when in a ſchiſm he ſat at *Avignon*; and that it was to be continued in the See of *Rome*, it is but offered to us upon conjecture, upon an act of providence, as they fancy it, ſo ordering it by viſion, and this proved by an Author which themſelves call fabulous and apocryphal, under the name of *Linus*, in *Biblioth. PP. de paſſione Petri & Pauli*: A goodly building which relies upon an event that was accidental, whoſe purpoſe was but inſinuated, the meaning of it but conjectur'd at, and this conjecture ſo uncertain, that it was an imperfect aim at the purpoſe of an event, which whether it was true or no, was ſo uncertain, that it is ten to one there was no ſuch matter. And yet again, another degree of uncertainty is, to whom the Biſhops of *Rome* do ſucceed: For *St. Paul* was as much Biſhop of *Rome*, as *St. Peter* was; there he preſided, there he preach'd, and he it was that was the Doctor

of the Uncircumcision and of the Gentiles, St. Peter of the Circumcision, and of the Jews only; and therefore the converted Jews at *Rome*, might with better reason claim the privilege of St. Peter, than the Romans and the Churches in her Communion, who do not derive from Jewish Parents.

7. If the words were never so appropriate to *Numb. 9.* Peter, or also communicated to his Successors, yet of what value will the consequent be? what prerogative is entail'd upon the Chair of *Rome*? For that St. Peter was the Ministerial Head of the Church, is the most that is desired to be proved by those and all other words brought for the same purposes, and interests of that See: Now let the Ministerial Head have what Dignity can be imagined, let him be the first (and in all Communities that are regular, and orderly there must be something that is first, upon certain occasions where an equal power cannot be exercised, and made pompous or ceremonial:) But will this Ministerial Headship infer an infallibility? will it infer more than the Headship of the Jewish Synagogue, where clearly the High Priest was supreme in many senses, yet in no sense infallible? will it infer more to us, than it did amongst the Apostles? amongst whom if for orders sake, St. Peter was the first, yet he had no compulsory power over the Apostles; there was no such thing spoke of, nor any such thing put in practice. And that the other Apostles were by a personal privilege as infallible as himself, is no reason to hinder the exercise of jurisdiction or any compulsory power over them; For though in Faith they were infallible, yet in manners and matter of fact as likely to err as St. Peter himself was, and certainly there might have something happened

in the whole College, that might have been a Record of his Authority, by transmitting an example of the exercise of some Judicial power over some one of them: If he had but withstood any of them to their faces, as *St. Paul* did him, it had been more than yet is said in his behalf. Will the Ministerial Headship infer any more than when the Church in a Community or a public capacity, should do any Act of Ministry Ecclesiastical, he shall be first in Order? Suppose this to be a dignity to preside in Councils, which yet was not always granted him: Suppose it to be a power of taking cognisance of the major Causes of Bishops when Councils cannot be called; Suppose it a double voice or the last decisive, or the negative in the causes exterior; Suppose it to be what you will of dignity or external regiment, which when all Churches were united in Communion, and neither the interest of States, nor the engagement of opinions had made dis-union, might better have been acted than now it can; yet this will fall infinitely short of a power to determine Controversies infallibly, and to prescribe to all Mens Faith and Consciences. A Ministerial Headship or the prime Minister cannot in any capacity become the foundation of the Church to any such purpose. And therefore men are causelessly amused with such premises, and are afraid of such Conclusions which will never follow from the admission of any sense of these words that can with any probability be pretended.

Numb. 10. 8. I consider that these Arguments from Scripture, are too weak to support such an Authority which pretends to give Oracles, and to answer infallibly in Questions of Faith, because there is greater reason to believe the Popes of *Rome* have

erred,

ered, and greater certainty of demonstration,
than these places can be that they are infallible,
as will appear by the instances and perpetual ex-
periment of their being deceived, of which there
is no Question, but of the sense of these places
there is: And indeed, if I had as clear Scri-
pture for their infallibility, as I have against
their half Communion, against their Service in
unknown tongue, worshipping of Images,
and divers other Articles, I would make no scru-
ple of believing, but limit and conform my un-
derstanding to all their Dictates, and believe it
reasonable all Prophefying should be restrain'd.
till then, I have leave to discourse, and to
follow my reason; and to my reason, it seems not
likely that neither Christ nor any of his Apo-
stles, St. *Peter* himself, nor St. *Paul* writing to
the Church of *Rome*, should speak the least word
in little of the infallibility of their Bishops, for
it was certainly as convenient to tell us of a re-
medy, as to foretell that certainly there must
be heresies, and need of a remedy. And
had been a certain determination of the Que-
stion, if when so rare an opportunity was mi-
nistered in the Question about Circumcision that
they should have sent to *Peter*, who for his in-
fallibility in ordinary, and his power of Head-
ship would not only with reason enough as be-
ing infallibly assisted, but also for his Authori-
ty have best determin'd the Question, if at least
the first Christians had known so profitable and
excellent a secret; and although we have but
the Record, that the first Council at *Jerusalem*
much observe the solemnities of Law, and
the forms of Conciliary proceedings, and the
ceremonials; yet so much of it as is recorded,
against them, St. *James* and not St. *Peter* gave
the

the final ſentence, and although St. *Peter* determin'd the Queſtion *pro libertate*, yet St. *James* made the Decree, and the *Aſſumentum* too, and gave ſentence they ſhould abſtain from ſome things there mentioned; which by way of temper he judg'd moſt expedient: And ſo it paſſed. And St. *Peter* ſhewed no ſign of a Superiour Authority, nothing of Superiour jurifdiction, *Ὅσα ἡ αὐτὸν μετὰ κοινῆς πάντων ποιῶντα γνώμης, ἐν αὐθιγῶς ἔδ' ἀρχαῶς.*

S. Chryſoſt.
hom. 3. in.
act. Apoſt.

Numb. 11. So that if this Queſtion be to be determin'd by Scripture, it muſt either be ended by plain places or by obſcure; plain places there are none, and thoſe that are with greateſt fancy pretended, are expounded by Antiquity to contrary purpoſes. But if obſcure places be all the *αὐθεντία*, by what means ſhall we infallibly find the ſenſe of them? The Pope's interpretation, though in all other caſes it might be pretended, in this cannot; for it is the thing in Queſtion, and therefore cannot determine for it ſelf; either therefore we have alſo another infallible guide beſides the Pope, and ſo we have two Foundations and two Heads (for this as well as the other upon the ſame reaſon) or elſe (which is indeed the truth) there is no infallible way to be infallibly aſſured that the Pope is infallible. Now it being againſt the common condition of Men above the pretences of all other Governours Eccleſiaſtical, againſt the Analogy of Scripture and the deportment of the other Apoſtles, againſt the Oeconomy of the Church, and St. *Peter*'s own entertainment, the preſumption lies againſt him, and theſe places, are to be left to their prime intentions, and not put upon the rack, to force them to confeſs what they never thought.

But

But now for Antiquity, if that be depofed in *Numb. 12.*
 Question, there are ſo many circumſtances
 to be conſidered to reconcile their words and
 their actions, that the proceſs is more trouble-
 ſome, than the Argument can be concluding, or
 matter conſiderable: But I ſhall a little con-
 ſider it, ſo far at leaſt as to ſhew either Antiqui-
 ty ſaid no ſuch thing as is pretended, or if they
 ſaid it is but little conſiderable, becauſe they
 did not believe themſelves; their practice was
 the greateſt evidence in the world againſt the
 ſence of their words. But I am much eaſed
 by a long diſquiſition in this particular (for I love
 to prove a Question by Arguments whoſe
 authority is in it ſelf as fallible, and by circum-
 ſtances made as uncertain as the Question) by
 ſaying of *Aeneas Sylvius*, that before the Ni-
 che Council every man liv'd to himſelf, and
 all reſpect was had to the Church of *Rome*,
 which practice could not well conſiſt with the
 doctrine of their Biſhops infallibility, and by
 ſequenſe ſupreme judgment and laſt reſolu-
 tion in matters of Faith; but eſpecially by the
 ſituation and conſequent acknowledgement of
Armstrong, that for 1000 years together the Fa-
 thers knew not of the Doctrine of the Pope's
 infallibility, for *Nilus*, *Gerson*, *Alemain*, the Di-
 ſciples of *Paris*, *Alphonſus de Caſtro*, and Pope *A-*
lexander VI. perſons who lived 1400 years after
Chriſt, affirm, that infallibility is not ſeated in
 the Popes perſon, that he may err and ſometimes
 ſhall hath, which is a clear demonſtration
 that the Church knew no ſuch Doctrine as this;
 there had been no Decree nor Tradition, nor
 general opinion of the Fathers, or of any Age
 before them; and therefore this opinion which
Armstrong would fain blaſt if he could, yet in
 his

De Rom. Pont.
l. 4. c. 2. § ſe-
cunda ſenten-
tia.

his Conclusion he ſays it is not *proprie heretica*. A device and an expreſſion of his own without ſenſe or precedent. But if the Fathers had ſpoke of it and believed it, why may not a diſagreeing perſon as well reject their Authority when it is in behalf of *Rome*, as they of *Rome* without ſcruple caſt them off when they ſpeak againſt it? For as *Bellarmino* being preſſed with the Authority of *Nilus* Biſhop of *Theſſalonica* and other Fathers, he ſays that the Pope acknowledges no Fathers but they are all his Children, and therefore they cannot depoſe againſt him; and if that be true, why ſhall we take their Teſtimonies for him; for if Sons depoſe in their Fathers behalf, it is twenty to one but the adverſe party will be caſt, and therefore at the beſt it is but *ſuſpectum Teſtimonium*. But indeed this diſcourſe ſignifies nothing, but a perpetual uncertainty in ſuch topicks, and that where a violent prejudice, or a concerning intereſt is engag'd, men by not regarding what any man ſays, proclaim to all the World that nothing is certain, but Divine Authority.

Numb. 13. But I will not take advantage of what *Bellarmino* ſays, nor what *Stapleton*, or any one of them all ſay, for that will be but to preſs upon perſonal perſuaſions, or to urge a general Queſtion with a particular defeillance, and the Queſtion is never the nearer to an end; for if *Bellarmino* ſays any thing that is not to another mans purpoſe or perſuaſion, that man will be tryed by his own Argument, not by anothers. And ſo would every man do that loves his liberty, as all wiſe men do, and therefore retain it by open violence, or private evaſions: But to return.

An Authority from *Irenæus* in this Question, on behalf of the Popes infallibility, or the Authority of the See of *Rome*, or of the necessity of communicating with them is very fallible; besides that there are almost a dozen answers to the words of the Allegation, as is to be seen in those that trouble themselves in this Question to the Allegation, and answering such Authorities, yet if they should make for the affirmation of this Question, it is *protestatio contra factum*. For *Irenæus* had no such great opinion of *Victor's* infallibility, that he believed things to the same degree of necessity that the Pope did, therefore he chides him for Excommunicating the *Asian* Bishops *ἀδρόως* all at a blow in the Question concerning Easter day; and in a Question of Faith he expressly disagreed from the doctrine of *Rome*; for *Irenæus* was of the *Milænar* opinion, and believed it to be a Tradition Apostolical; now if the Church of *Rome* was of that opinion, then why is she not now? where is the succession of her doctrine? But if she was not of that opinion then, and *Irenæus* was, where was his belief of that Churches infallibility? The same I urge concerning St. *Cyriacus* who was the head of a Sect in opposition to the Church of *Rome*, in the Question of re-baptization, and he and the Abettors, *Firmilian* and the other Bishops of *Cappadocia*, and the *Manichees* spoke harsh words of *Stephen*, and such became them not to speak to an infallible Doctor, and the supreme Head of the Church. I urge none of them to the disadvantage of the See, but only note the Satyr of *Firmilian* against him, because it is of good use, to shew that it is possible for them in their ill carriage to blast the reputation and efficacy of a great Authority:
For

Epist. Firmi-
liani contr.
Steph. ad Cy-
prian. Vid. e-
tiam Ep. Cy-
priani ad
Pompeium.

Cyprian. Epist.
ad Quintum
fratrem.

For he ſays that the Church did pretend the au-
thority of the Apoſtles, *cum in multis ſacra-*
tis divina rei, à principio discrepet, & ab Eccle-
Hierosolymitanâ, & defamet Petrum & Paulum
tanquam authores. And a little after juſtly
dignor (ſays he) *apertam & manifeſtam fal-*
tiam Stephani, per quam veritas Chriſtiana
aboletur, which words ſay plainly that for
the goodly pretence of Apoſtolicall Authority
the Church of Rome did then in many things
of Religion diſagree from Divine Inſtitution
(and from the Church of Jeruſalem, which they
had as great eſteem of for Religion ſake, as of
Rome for its principality) and that ſtill in pre-
tending to St. Peter and St. Paul they diſhonoured
 thoſe bleſſed Apoſtles, and deſtroyed the
honour of their pretence by their untoward pre-
varication; which words I confeſs paſs my ſkill
to reconcile them to an opinion of infallibili-
ty; and although they were ſpoken by an an-
gry perſon, yet they declare that in Africa they
were not then perſuaded, as now they were at
Rome: *Nam nec Petrus quem primum Dominus*
legit vendicavit ſibi aliquid insolentèr aut arro-
gantèr aſſumpſit, ut diceret ſe primatum tenere
That was their belief then, and how the con-
trary hath grown up to that height where now
it is, all the World is witneſs: And now I ſhall
not need to note concerning St. Hierom, that he
gave a complement to Damaskus, that he would
not have given to Liberius, *Qui tecum non col-*
ligit ſpargit. For it might be true enough of
Damaskus who was a good Biſhop and a right be-
liever; but if Liberius's name had been put in-
ſtead of Damaskus, the caſe had been altered with
the name; for St. Hierom did believe and write
it ſo, that Liberius had ſubſcrib'd to Arianiſm.

And

And if either he or any of the reſt had believ'd the Pope could not be a Heretick nor his Faith, but be ſo good and of ſo competent Authority as to be a Rule to Chriſtendom; Why did they not appeal to the Pope in the Arrian Controverſy? Why was the Biſhop of *Rome* made a Paragon and a Concurrent as other good Biſhops were, and not a Judge and an Arbitrator in the Queſtion? Why did the Fathers preſcribe ſo many Rules and cautions and proviſoes for the diſcovery of Hereſy? Why were the Emperours at ſo much charge, and the Church at ſo much trouble as to call and convene in Councils reſpectively, to diſpute ſo frequently, to write ſo laboriouſly, to obſerve all advantages againſt their Adverſaries, and for the truth, and never offered to call for the Pope to determine the Queſtion in his Chair? certainly no way could have been ſo expedite, none ſo concluding and peremptory, none could have concluded ſo certainly, none could have triumph'd openly over all diſcrepant as this, if they were known of any ſuch thing as his being infallible, or that he had been appointed by Chriſt to be the Judge of Controverſies. And therefore I will not trouble this Diſcourſe to excuſe more words either pretended or really ſaid for this purpoſe of the Pope, for they would make Books ſwell and the Queſtion endleſs. I ſhall only to this purpoſe obſerve that Old Writers were ſo far from believing the infallibility of the Roman Church or Biſhop, that many Biſhops and many Churches did actually live and continue out of the Roman Communion; particularly * *St. Auſtin*, who with 217 Biſhops and their Succeſſors for 100 years toſtand ſeparate from that Church, if we

De Script. Ecclef. in Fortunatiano.

* *Ubi illa Auguſtini & reliquorum prudentia? quis*

may

jam ferat cras-
sissima igno-
rantia illam
vocem in tor-
et tantis Pa-
tribus? Alan.
Cop. dialog. p.
76, 77. Vide
etiam Bonifac.
II. Epist. ad
Eulaliū A-
lexandrinum.
Lindanum Pa-
nopl. l. 4. c. 89.
in fine Salme-
ron. Tom. 12.
Traff. 68. § ad
Canonem. San-
der. de visibili
Monarchia, l.
7. n. 411. Ba-
ron. Tom. 10.
A. D. 878.

may believe their own Records: So did *Igu-
tius* of *Constantinople*, *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Cypri-
an*, *Firmilian*, those Bishops of *Asia* that sepa-
rated in the Question of Easter, and those of
Africa in the Question of rebaptization: But be-
sides this, most of them had opinions which the
Church of *Rome* disavows now, and therefore
did so then, or else she hath innovated in her
Doctrine, which though it be most true and no-
torious, I am sure she will never confess. But
no excuse can be made for *St. Austin's* disagre-
ing, and contesting in the Question of appeal-
ing to *Rome*, the necessity of Communicating In-
fants, the absolute damnation of Infants to the
pains of Hell, if they die before Baptism, and
divers other particulars. It was a famous act
of the Bishops of *Liguria* and *Istria* who seeing
the Pope of *Rome* consenting to the fifth Synod
in disparagement of the famous Council of *Chal-
cedon*, which for their own interests they did
not like of, they renounced subjection to his
Patriarchate, and erected a Patriarch at *Aqui-
leia* who was afterwards translated to *Venice*
where his name remains to this day. It is al-
so notorious that most of the Fathers were of
opinion that the Souls of the Faithful did not
enjoy the beatifick Vision before Dooms-day
whether *Rome* was then of that opinion or no
I know not, I am sure now they are not; wit-
ness the Councils of *Florence* and *Trent*; but of
this I shall give a more full account afterward.
But if to all this which is already noted, we
add that great variety of opinions amongst the
Fathers and Councils in assignation of the Ca-
non, they not consulting with the Bishop of
Rome, or any of them thinking themselves bound
to follow his Rule in enumeration of the Books

of Script
to this
8. But
Popes w
Preacher
impious
some tha
gious ign
rent Sop
nds mo
ity will
other
cause;
Conscien
Antifex
sum, /
gulam /
ance ar
the extr
take it r
an, Po
Monta
peace
ill Prax
but let
whether
some suc
gilins c
pistle t
all them
person;
to give
ould p
g by E
orders;
firms t
antibus

of Scripture, I think no more need to be said as to this particular.

8. But now if after all this, there be some *Numb. 15.*

Popes which were notorious Hereticks, and Preachers of false Doctrine, some that made impious Decrees both in faith and manners; some that have determin'd Questions with egregious ignorance and stupidity, some with apparent Sophistry, and many to serve their own ends most openly, I suppose then the infallibility will disband, and we may do to him as to other good Bishops, believe him when there is cause; but if there be none, then to use our

Consciences, *Non enim salvat Christianum quod Pontifex constanter affirmat praeceptum suum esse verum, sed oportet illud examinari, & se juxta regulam superius datum dirigere:* I would not in-
Tract. de interdict. Compos. a Theol. Venet. prop. 13.

dance and repeat the errors of dead Bishops, if the extreme boldness of the pretence did not make it necessary: But if we may believe *Tertul-*

Lib. adver. Praxeam.

an, Pope Zepherinus approv'd the Prophecies

of Montanus, and upon that approbation grant-

ed peace to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia;

but Praxeas perswaded him to revoke his act:

let this rest upon the credit of *Tertullian*, *Vid. Liberal. in breviario, cap. 22.*

whether Zepherinus were a Montanist or no;

some such thing there was for certain. Pope *Durand. 4. dist. 7. q. 4.*

Innocentius denied two natures in Christ, and in his

epistle to *Theodora* the Empress anathematized

all them that said he had two natures in one

person; St. Gregory himself permitted Priests

to give confirmation, which is all one as if he

should permit Deacons to consecrate, they be-

ing by Divine Ordinance annex to the higher

orders; and upon this very ground *Adrianus*

affirms that the Pope may err in *definiendis dog-* *Qua. de con-*

matibus fidei. And that we may not fear we *firm. art. ult.*

O

shall

3. dist. 24.
q. unica.

A. D. 3, 7. n.
41.

Dist. 19. c. 9.

L. 4. Ep. 2.

Vid. Corranz.
Sum. Cencil.
fol. 218. Edit.
Antwerp.

Cap. per vene-
rabilem. qui
filii sint legiti-
mi.

shall want instances, we may to secure it take their own confession, *Nam multe sunt decretales hereticae*, says *Occham* as he is cited by *Almain*, & firmiter hoc credo (says he for his own particular) *sed non licet dogmatizare oppositum quoniam sunt determinatae*. So that we may as well see that it is certain that Popes may be Hereticks, as that it is dangerous to say so; and therefore there are so few that teach it: All the Patriarchs and the Bishop of *Rome* himself subscrib'd to *Arrianism* (as *Baronius* confesses;) and * *Gratian* affirms that Pope *Anastasius* the Second was stricken of God for communicating with the Heretick *Photinus*. I know it will be made light of that *Gregory* the Seventh faith the very exorcists of the Roman Church are Superior to Princes. But what shall we think of that decretal of *Gregory* the Third, who wrote to *Boniface* his Legate in *Germany*, *quod illi quorum uxores infirmitate aliquâ morbida debitum reddere noluerunt, aliis poterant nubere?* was this a Doctrine fit for the Head of the Church, and infallible Doctor? it was plainly, if any thing ever was *doctrina Daemoniorum*, and is noted for such by *Gratian*, *caus. 32. q. 7. can. Quod proposuisti*. Where the gloss also intimates that the same privilege was granted to the Englishmen by *Gregory*, *quia novi erant in fide*. And sometimes we had little reason to expect much better; for, not to instance in that learned discourse in the Canon Law *de majoritate & obedientiâ*, where the Popes Supremacy over Kings is proved from the first chapter of *Genesis*, and the Pope is the Sun, and the Emperor is the Moon, for that was the fancy of one Pope perhaps; though made authentick and doctrinal by him; it was (if it be possible) more

more ridiculous, that Pope *Innocent* the Third argues that the Moſaical Law was ſtill to be obſerved, and that upon this Argument, *Sanè*, ſaith he, *cum Deuteronomium ſecunda lex interpretetur ex vi vocabuli comprobatur ut quod ibi determinatur in Testamento novo debeat observari*: Worſe yet; for when there was a corruption crept into the Decree called *Sancta Romana*, Dist. 15. apud Gratian. where inſtead of theſe words *Sedulii opus hereticis verſibus deſcriptum*, all the old Copies till late read *hereticis verſibus deſcriptum*; this very miſtake made many wiſe men, (as *Pierius* De Sacerd. barb.) yea Pope *Adrian* the Sixth, no worſe man, believe that all Poetry was heretical, becauſe (forſooth) Pope *Gelaſius* whoſe Decree that was, although he believed *Sedulius* to be a good Catholick, yet as they thought, he concluded his Verſes to be heretical. But theſe were ignorances; it hath been worſe amongſt ſome others, whoſe errors have been more malicious, Pope *Honorius* was condemned by the ſixth General Synod, and his Epistles burnt, and in the ſeventh action of the eighth Synod, the Acts of the Roman Council under *Adrian* the Second are recited, in which it is ſaid that *Honorius* was juſtly Anathematiz'd, becauſe he was convict of hereſy. *Bellarmino* it is probable that Pope *Adrian* and the Roman Council were deceived with falſe Copies of the ſixth Synod, and that *Honorius* was no Heretick. To this I ſay, that although the Roman Synod and the eighth general Synod, and Pope *Adrian*, altogether are better witneſſes for the truth than *Bellarmino*'s conjecture is againſt it, if we allow his conjecture we ſhall loſe nothing in the whole, for either the Pope is no Heretick, or he is a Heretick as

Honorius was, or else a Council is to us no infallible determiner; I say, as to us, for if *Adrian* and the whole *Roman* Council and the eighth General were all cozen'd with false Copies of the sixth Synod, which was so little a while before them, and whose acts were transacted and kept in the Theatre and Records of the Catholick Church; he is a bold man that will be confident that he hath true Copies now. So that let which they please stand or fall, let the Pope be a Heretick or the Councils be deceived and palpably abused, (for the other, we will dispute it upon other instances and arguments when we shall know which part they will choose) in the mean time we shall get in the general what we lose in the particular. This only, this device of saying the Copies of the Councils were false, was the stratagem of *Albertus Pighius* 900 years after the thing was done, of which invention *Pighius* was presently admonished, blamed, and wished to recant. Pope *Nicholas* explicated the Mystery of the Sacrament with so much ignorance and zeal that in condemning *Berengarius* he taught a worse impiety. But what need I any more instances; it is a confessed case by *Baronius*, by *Biel*, by *Stella*, *Almain*, *Occham*, and *Canus*, and generally by the best Scholars in the Church of *Rome*, that a Pope may be a Heretick, and that some of them actually were so, and no less than three General Councils did believe the same thing: viz. sixth, seventh, and eighth, as *Belarmine* is pleased to acknowledge in his fourth book *de Pontifice Romano*, c. 11. resp. ad Arg. 4. And the Canon *ſi Papa*, dist. 40. affirms it in exprefs terms, that a Pope is judicable and punishable in that case. But there is no wound

*Vid. diatrib. de
act. 6. & 7. Synod.
praefatione ad Lectorem
& Dominicum Bannes
22. q. 1. a.
10. dub. 2.*

* *Picus Mirand. in expoſit. theoreti. 4.*

but ſome Emperick or other will pretend to cure it, and there is a cure for this too. For though it be true that if a Pope were a Heretick, the Church might depoſe him, yet no Pope can be a Heretick, not but that the man may, but the Pope cannot, for he is *ipſo facto* no Pope, for he is no Chriſtian; ſo *Bellarmino*: and ſo when you think you have him faſt, he is gone, and nothing of the Pope left; but who ſees not the extream folly of this evasion? For beſides that out of fear and caution he grants more than he needs, more than was ſought for in the Queſtion, the Pope hath no more privilege than the Abbot of *Cluny*, for he cannot be a Heretick, nor be depoſed by a Council, for if he be *manifeſtly* a Heretick he is *ipſo facto* no Abbot, for he is no Chriſtian; and if the Pope be a Heretick *privately and occultly*, for that he may be accuſed and judged ſaid the Gloſs upon the Canon *ſi Paſtor diff. 40.* And the Abbot of *Cluny* and one of his meaneſt Monks can be no more, therefore the caſe is all one. But * this is fitter to make ſport with than to interrupt a ſerious diſcourſe. And therefore although the Canon *Sancta Romana* approves all the Decretals of Popes, yet that every Decretal hath not decreed it firm enough, but that they are ſo warily received by them, that when they liſt they are pleaſed to diſſent from them; and it is evident in the Extravagant of *Sixtus IV. Com. De reliquiis*; who appointed a Feaſt of the immaculate conception, a ſpecial Office for the day, and Indulgences enough to the obſervers of it: And yet the *Dominicans* were ſo far from believing the Pope to be intalli- ble and his Decree authentick, that they de- claim'd againſt it in their Pulpits ſo furioſly and ſo long till they were prohibited under pain

L. 2. c. 30. ubi
ſupra. §. eſt
ergo.

* Vide Al-
phonſ. à Ciffr.
lib. 1. adv. ha-
reſ. c. 4. hoc
lemma viden-
tem affabre.

Vid. etiam In-
nocentium
Serm. 2. de
conſecrat. Pon-
tiſ. añ. 7 8.
Synodi. &
Concil. c. ſub
Symmachio.
vide Collat. 8.
can. 12. ubi P
P. judiciale
ſententiam P.

*Vigili in cauſa
trium Capitu-
lorum damna-
runt expreſſe.
Extra com.
Extrav. grave.
Tit. X.*

of Excommunication, to ſay the Virgin Mary was conceived in Original ſin; Now what ſolemnity can be more required for the Pope to make a Cathedral determination of an Article? The Article was ſo concluded, that a Feaſt was inſtituted for its celebration, and pain of Excommunication threatned to them which ſhould preach the contrary; Nothing more ſolemn, nothing more confident and ſevere: And yet after all this, to ſhew that whatſoever thoſe people would have us to believe, they'll believe what they liſt themſelves: This thing was not determined *de fide* ſaith *Viſtorellus*; Nay, the Author of the Gloſs of the Canon Law hath theſe expreſs words, *De feſto Conceptionis nihil dicitur quia celebrandum non eſt, ſicut in multis regionibus fit, & maxime in Angliâ, & hac eſt ratio, quia in peccatis concepta fuit ſicut & ceteri Sancti.* And the Commiſſaries, of *Sixtus V.* and *Gregory XIII.* did not expunge theſe words, but left them upon Record, not only againſt a received and more approved opinion of the *Jefuits* and *Franciſcans*, but alſo in plain defiance of a Decree made by their viſible head of the Church, who (if ever any thing was decreed by a Pope, with an intent to oblige all Chriſtendom) decreed * this to that purpoſe.

*De Angelo
cuſtod. fol 59.
de conſecrat.
diſt. 3. can. pro-
nunciand gloſſ.
verb. Natiuit.*

* *Hæc in per-
petuum vali-
durâ conſtitu-
tione ſtatui-
mus, &c. De
reliquis, &c.
Extrav. Com.
Sixt. 4. cap. 1.*

Numb. 16.

So that without taking particular notice of it, that egregious ſophiſtry and flattery of the late Writers of the Roman Church is in this inſtance, beſides divers others before mentioned, clearly made invalid. For here the Biſhop of *Rome* not as a private Doctör, but as Pope, not by declaring his own opinion, but with an intent to oblige the Church, gave ſentence in a Queſtion which the *Dominicans* will ſtill account *pro non determinatâ*. And every decretal recorded in the

the

the Canon Law if it be falſe in the matter, is juſt ſuch another inſtance: And *Alphonſus a Caſtro* ſays it to the ſame purpoſe, in the inſtance of *Celeſtine* diſſolving Marriages for hereſy, *Neque Celeſtini error talis fuit qui ſoli negligentia impu- tari debeat, ita ut illum erraſſe dicamus velut pri- vatam perſonam & non ut Papam, quoniam hujus- modi Celeſtini definitio habetur in antiquis decreta- libus in cap. Laudabilem, titulo de converſione in- fidelium; quam ego ipſe vidi & legi, lib. 1. adv. hereſ. cap. 4.* And therefore 'tis a moſt intole- rable folly to pretend that the Pope cannot err in his Chair, though he may err in his Cloſet, and may maintain a falſe opinion even to his death: For beſides that, it is ſottiſh to think that either he would not have the world of his own opinion (as all men naturally would) or that if he were ſet in his Chair, he would de- termine contrary to himſelf in his ſtudy (and therefore to repreſent it as poſſible, they are ſain to flie to a Miracle for which they have no colour, neither inſtructions, nor inſinuation, nor warrant, nor promiſe; beſides that, it were impious and unreaſonable to depoſe him for hereſy, who may ſo eaſily, even by ſetting himſelf in his Chair and reviewing his Theo- rems, be cured :) it is alſo againſt a very great experience: For beſides the former Allegations it is moſt notorious, that Pope *Alexander III.* in a Council at *Rome* of 300 Archbishops and Biſhops *A. D.* 1179. condemn'd *Peter Lombard* of hereſy in a matter of great concernment, no leſs than ſomething about the incarnation; from which ſentence he was, after 36 years abiding it, abſolved by Pope *Innocent III.* without re- pentance or dereliction of the opinion: Now if this ſentence was not a Cathedral Dictate, as

L. 2. de Con-
cil. cap. 5.

De Pontif.
Rom. c. 14.
& respondeo.
In 3. sent. d. 24.
q. in con. 6.
dub. 6. in fine.

* Proverbiali-
ter olim di-
ctum erat de
Decretalibus.
Male cum re-
bus humanis
aërum esse, ex
quo decretis a-
la accesserunt.
scil. cum De-
cretales post
decretum Gra-
tiani sub nomi-
ne Gregorii no-
mi edebantur.

De Auth rit.
Eccles. cap. 10.
in fine.

solemn and great as could be expected, or as is said to be necessary to oblige all Christendom, let the great Hyperaspists of the Roman Church be Judges, who tell us that a particular Council with the Popes confirmation is made Oecumenical by adoption, and is infallible and obliges all Christendom; so *Bellarmino*: And therefore he sayes, that it is *temerarium, erroneum, & proximum hæresi*, to deny it, but whether it be or not it is all one, as to my purpose: For it is certain that in a particular Council confirm'd by the Pope, if ever; then and there the Pope sat himself in his Chair, and it is as certain that he sat besides the cushion and determined ridiculously and falsly in this case: But this is a device for which there is no Scripture, no Tradition, no one dogmatical resolute saying of any Father, Greek or Latin, for above 1000 years after Christ: And themselves when they list can acknowledge as much. And therefore *Bellarmino's* saying, I perceive is believed by them to be true: That there are many things in the * Decretal Epistles, which make not Articles to be *de fide*. And therefore, *Non est necessarium credendum determinatis per summum Pontificem*, says *Almain*: And this serves their turns in every thing they do not like, and therefore I am resolved it shall serve my turn also for some thing, and that is, that the matter of the Pope's infallibility is so ridiculous and improbable, that they do not believe it themselves: Some of them clearly practised the contrary, and although Pope *Leo X.* hath determined the Pope to be above a Council, yet the *Sorbon* to this day scorn it at the very heart. And I might urge upon them that scorn that *Almain* truly enough by way of Argument alledges. It is a wonder

wonder that they who affirm the Pope cannot err in judgment, do not alſo affirm that he cannot ſin: they are like enough to ſay ſo ſays he, if the vicious lives of the Popes did not make a daily confutation of ſuch flattery: Now for my own particular, I am as confident and think it as certain that Popes are actually deceived in matters of Chriſtian Doctrin, as that they do pervert the laws of Chriſtian Piety: And therefore † *Alphonſus à Caſtro* calls them *impudentes Papa aſſentatores*, that aſcribe to him infallibility in judgment, or interpretation of ſcripture.

† L. 1. c. 4.
adverſ. hereſ.
edit. Paris
1534. In ſeqq.
non expurgan-
tur iſta verba.
at idem ſenſus
manet.

But if themſelves did believe it heartily, what excuſe is there in the world, for the ſtrange uncharitableneſs or ſupine negligence of the Popes, that they do not ſet themſelves in their Chair and write infallible Commentaries, and determine all Controverſies without error, and blaſt hereſies with the word of their mouth, declare what is and what is not *de fide*, that his principles and Confidants may agree upon it; reconcile the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, and ſound all Myſteries? for it cannot be imagined but he that was endued with ſo ſupreme power in order to ſo great ends, was alſo fitted with proportionable, that is extraordinary perſonal abilities, ſucceeding and deriv'd upon the ſenſes of all the Popes. And then the Doctours of this Church, need not trouble themſelves with ſtudy, nor writing explications of Scripture, might wholly attend to practical devotion, leave all their Scholaſtical wranglings, the diſtinguiſhing opinions of their Orders, and might have a fine Church, ſomething like Iſrael or *Lucian's* Kingdom in the Moon: if they ſay they cannot do this when they liſt,

Numb. 11.

list, but when they are mov'd to it by the Spirit, then we are never the nearer; for so may the Bishop of *Angolesme* write infallible Commentaries when the holy Ghost moves him to it, for I suppose his motions are not ineffectual, but he will sufficiently assist us in performing of what he actually moves us to: But among so many hundred Decrees which the Popes of *Rome* have made or confirmed and attested (which is all one) I would fain know in how many of them did the holy Ghost assist them? If they know it, let them declare it, that it may be certain which of their Decretals are *de fide*; for as yet none of his own Church knows: If they do not know, then neither can we know it from them, and then we are as uncertain as ever, and besides the holy Ghost may possibly move him, and by his ignorance of it may neglect so profitable motion, and then his promise of infallible assistance will be to very little purpose, because it is with very much fallibility applicable to practice. And therefore it is absolutely useless to any man or any Church, because, suppose it settled in *Thesi*, that the Pope is infallible, yet whether he will do his duty, and perform those conditions of being assisted which are required of him, or whether he be a secret Simoniac (for if he be, he is *ipso facto*, no Pope) or whether he be a Bishop, or Priest, or a Christian being all uncertain; every one of these depending upon the intention and power of the Baptizer or Ordainer, which also are fallible, because they depend upon the honesty and power of other men we cannot be infallibly certain of any Pope that he is infallible, and therefore when our Questions are determin'd we are never the nearer, but may hug our selves in an imaginary

imaginary truth, the certainty of finding truth depending upon ſo many fallible and contingent circumſtances. And therefore, the if it were true, being ſo to no purpoſe, is to be preſum'd that God never gave a power ſo impertinently, and from whence no benefit can accrue to the Chriſtian Church, for whole uſe and benefit, if at all, it muſt needs have been appointed.

But I am too long in this impertinenſy : If I *Numb. 18.*
were bound to call any man Maſter upon earth, and to believe him upon his own affirmative and authority : I would of all men leaſt follow him that pretends he is infallible and cannot prove it. That he cannot prove it, makes me as uncertain as ever, and that he pretends to infallibility makes him careleſs of uſing ſuch means which will morally ſecure thoſe wiſe perſons, who knowing their own aptneſs to be deceiv'd, what endeavours they can to ſecure themſelves from error, and ſo become the better and more probable guides.

Well ! Thus far we are come : Although we *Numb. 19.*
are ſecured in fundamental points from invincible error, by the plain, expreſs, and dogmatical places of Scripture, yet in other things we are not but may be invincibly miſtaken, becauſe of the obſcurity and difficulty in the controverted parts of Scripture, by reaſon of the uncertainty of the means of its Interpretation, and Tradition is of an uncertain reputation, and ſometimes evidently falſe, Councils are contradictory to each other, and therefore certainly are equally deceiv'd many of them, and therefore all may ; and then the Popes of Rome are very likely to miſlead us, but cannot aſcertain us of truth in matter of Queſtion ; and in
this

this world we believe in part, and prophecy in part, and this imperfection ſhall never be done away till we be tranſlated to a more glorious ſtate; either we muſt throw our chances, and get truth by accident or predeſtination, or elſe we muſt lie ſafe in a mutual toleration, and private liberty of perſuaſion, unleſs ſome other Anchor can be thought upon where we may faſten our floating Veſſels, and ride ſafely.

S E C T. VIII.

Of the diſability of Fathers or Writers Eccleſiaſtical, to determine our Questions with certainty and Truth.

Numb. 1.

THERE are ſome that think they can determine all Questions in the world by two or three ſayings of the Fathers, or by the conſent of ſo many as they will pleaſe to call a concurrent Teſtimony: But this conſideration will ſoon be at an end; for if the Fathers, when they are witneſſes of Tradition do not always ſpeak truth as it hapned in the caſe of *Papias* and his numerous Followers for almoſt three Ages together, then is their Teſtimony more improbable when they diſpute or write Commentaries.

Numb. 2.

2. The Fathers of the firſt Ages ſpoke unitedly concerning divers Questions of ſecret Theology, and yet were afterwards contradicted by one perſonage of great reputation, whoſe credit had ſo much influence upon the world, as to make the contrary opinion become popular.

why then may not we have the ſame liberty, when ſo plain an uncertainty is in their perſuaſions, and ſo great contrariety in their Doctrines? But this is evident in the caſe of abſolute predeſtination, which till St. *Auſtin*'s time no man preached, but all taught the contrary, and yet the reputation of this one excellent man covered the ſcene. But if he might diſſent from General a Doctrine, why may not we do ſo, it being pretended that he is ſo excellent a precedent to be followed, if we have the ſame reaſon? he had no more Authority nor diſpenſation to diſſent, than any Biſhop hath now. And therefore St. *Auſtin* hath dealt ingeniouſly, and as he took this liberty to himſelf, ſo he deſerves it not to others, but indeed forces them to reſerve their own liberty: And therefore when St. *Hierom* had a great mind to follow the *Seſſ. ult.* others in a point that he fancied, and the beſt ſecurity he had, was, *Patiaris me cum talibus errare*, St. *Auſtin* would not endure it, but answered his reaſon, and neglected the Authority. And therefore it had been moſt unreaſonable that we ſhould do that now, though in his be- lief, which he towards greater perſonages (for they were then) at that time judg'd to be unreaſonable. It is a plain reſeſſion from Anti- quity, which was determin'd by the Council of *Nice*, *piorum animas purgatas, &c. mox in* *glorium recipi, & intueri clarè ipſum Deum trinum* *unum ſicuti eſt*: As who pleaſe to try, may ſee it dogmatically reſolved to the contrary by (a) *Juſtin Martyr*, (b) *Irenæus*, by (c) *Origen*, (d) *St. Chryſoſtom*, (e) *Theodoret*, (f) *Arethas Ca-* *ſarienſis*, (g) *Euthymius*, who may answer for the Greek Church, and it is plain that it was the opinion of the Greek Church by that great diffi-

culty

(a) 2. 60. ad
Christian.

(b) Lib. 5.

(c) Hom. 7. in
Levit.

(d) Hom. 39.
in 1 Cor.

(e) In c. 11.
ad Heb.

(f) In c. 6. ad
Apoc.

(g) In 16. c.
Luc.

culty the Romans had of bringing the Greeks to subscribe to the *Florentine Council*, where the Latins acted their master-piece of wit and stratagem, the greatest that hath been till the famous and superpolitick design of *Trent*. And for the Latin Church, (h) *Tertullian*, (i) *St. Ambrose*, (k) *St. Austin*, (l) *St. Hilary*, (m) *Prudentius*, (n) *Lactantius*, (o) *Victorinus Martyr*, (p) *St. Bernard* are known to be of opinion that the Souls of the Saints are in *abditis receptaculis & exterioribus atriis*, where they expect the resurrection of their bodies, and the glorification of their Souls, and though they all believe them to be happy, yet they enjoy not the beatifick Vision before the resurrection: Now there being so full a consent of Fathers (for many more may be added) and the Decree of Pope *John XXII.* besides, who was so confident for his Decree that he commanded the University of *Paris* to swear that they would preach it and no other, and that none should be promoted to degrees in Theology, that did not swear the like, (as (q) *Occham*, (r) *Gerson*, (s) *Marsilius* and (t) *Adrianus* report :) Since it is esteemed lawful to dissent from all these, I hope no man will be so unjust to press other men to consent to an Authority which he himself judges to be incompetent. These two great instances are enough, but if more were necessary I could instance in the opinion of the *Chiliasm*, maintained by the second and third Centuries, and disavowed ever since: in the Doctrine of communicating Infants, taught and practised as necessary by the fourth and fifth Centuries, and detested by the Latin Church in all the following Ages: in the variety of opinions concerning the very form of baptism, some keeping close to the institution and the

(h) Lib. 4.
adv. Mar.

(i) L. 2. de
Cain. c. 2.

(k) Ep. III. ad
Fortunatia.
num.

(l) In Psal.
138.

(m) De exeq.
defunctor.

(n) L. 7. c. 21.

(o) Inc. 6. A.
poc.

(p) Serm. 3. de
em. sanctis.

Vid. enim St.
Aug. in En-

chir. c. 108.
& l. 12. de ci-

vit. Dei. c. 9.
& in Pf. 36.

& in l. 1. re-
tract. c. 14.

Vid. insuper
testimonia quæ

collegit. Spala.
l. 5. c. 8. n. 98.

de repub. Eccl.
& Sixt. Senen.

l. 6. annot. 345.

(q) In oper. 90.
dierum.

(r) Serm. de
Paschal.

(s) In 1. sent.
q. 13. a. 3.

(t) In 4. de
Sacram. confir-
mat.

ords of its firſt ſanction, others affirming it to ſufficient, if it be adminiſtered *in nomine Chriſti*; particularly St. Ambroſe, Pope Nicholas the firſt, * V. Bede and † St. Bernard beſides ſome writers of after Ages as *Hugo de S. Victore*, and Doctours generally his contemporaries. And would not be inconsiderable to obſerve, that any Synod, General, National, or Provincial, preceded from by the Church of the later Age, (there have been very many) then, ſo many others as were then aſſembled and united in opinion are eſteemed no Authority to determine our ſituations. Now ſuppoſe 200 Fathers aſſembled in ſuch a Council, if all they had writ books, and Authorities, 200 Authorities had been alledged in confirmation of an opinion, would have made a mighty noiſe, and loaded every man with an inſupportable prejudice that would diſſent: And yet every opinion maintaining againſt the Authority of any one Council, though but Provincial, is in its proportion ſuch violent reſiſſion and neglect of the Authority and doctrine of ſo many Fathers as were then aſſembled, who did as much declare their opinion in theſe Aſſemblies by their Suffrages, as if they writ it in ſo many books; and their opinion is more conſiderable in the Aſſembly than in their writings, becauſe it was more deliberate, aſſiſted, united and more dogmatical. In purſuance of this obſervation, it is to be noted by way of ſequence, that St. Auſtin and two hundred and ſeventeen Biſhops and all their * Succeſſors for the whole age together did conſent in denying appeals to Rome; and yet the Authority of ſo

*De consecrat.
diſt. 4. c. à
quod in Judeo.*

** Inc. 10. Aſſ.*

† Ep. 3. o.

** Vid. Epiſt.*

Bonifacii II.

apud Nicol.

num. Tom. 2.

Concil. pag.

544 & exem-

plar precum

Eulalii apud

eundem. lib. id.

p. 525. Qui

anathemati-

*omnes decifores ſuos qui in ea cauſa Roma ſe opponendo recta fidei regulam
violati ſunt, inter quos tamen fuit Auguſtinus quem pro maledicto Celeſtino
agnoscat, admittendo ſc. exemplar precum. Vid. Doct. Marta, de juridi-
ca p. 273. & Eraſm. annot. in Hieron. præfat. in Daniel.*

many

many Fathers (all true Catholicks) is of force now at *Rome* in this Queſtion ; but if it be in a matter they like, one of theſe Fathers alone is ſufficient. The Doctrin of St. *Auſtin* alone brought in the feſtival and veneration of the aſſumption of the bleſſed Virgin, and the harſh ſentence paſſed at *Rome* upon unbaptized Infants, and the *Dominican* opinion concerning predeſtination, derived from him alone as from their Original : ſo that if a Father ſpeaks for them, it is wonderful to ſee what Tragedies are ſtirred up againſt them that diſſent, as is to be ſeen in that excellent nothing of *Campion's* teſt-reasons. But if the Fathers be againſt them, then *Patres in quibusdam non leviter laſſi ſunt* ſays *Bellarmino*, and *conſtat quosdam ex præcipuis* it is certain the chiefeſt of them have ſouly erred. Nay, *Poſa*, *Salmeron*, and *Wadding* in the Queſtion of the immaculate conception make no ſcruple to diſſent from Antiquity ; to preſent new Doctors before the Old, and to juſtify themſelves, bring inſtances in which the Church of *Rome* had determin'd againſt the Fathers. And it is not excuſe enough to ſay that ſingle the Fathers may err, but if they concur they are certain Teſtimony. For there is no queſtion this day diſputed by perſons that are willing to be tryed by the Fathers, ſo generally atteſted on either ſide, as ſome points are which both ſides diſlike ſeverally or conjunctly. And therefore 'tis not honeſt for either ſide to preſs the Authority of the Fathers, as a concluding Argument in matter of diſpute, unleſs themſelves will be content to ſubmit in all things to the Teſtimony of an equal number of them, which I am certain neither ſide will do.

De verb. Dei
l. 3. c. 10. §
diceſ.

3. If I ſhould reckon all the particular rea-
 ſons againſt the certainty of this topick, it
 would be more than needs as to this Queſtion,
 and therefore I will abſtain from all diſparage-
 ment of thoſe worthy Perſonages, who were
 excellent lights to their ſeveral Dioceſes, and
 Churches. And therefore I will not inſtance that
Alexandrinus taught that Chriſt felt no
 hunger or thirſt, but eat only to make demon-
 ſtration of the verity of his humane nature:
 nor that *St. Hilary* taught that Chriſt in his
 ſufferings had no ſorrow; nor that *Origen*
 taught the pains of Hell not to have an
 eternal duration: Nor that *St. Cyprian* taught
 baptiſm; nor that *Athenagoras* condemned
 ſecond marriages; nor that *St. John Damascen*
 ſaid, Chriſt only prayed in appearance, not
 really and in truth; I will let them all reſt
 in peace, and their memories in honour; for if
 I ſhould enquire into the particular probations
 of this Article, I muſt do to them as I ſhould
 be forced to do now; if any man ſhould ſay
 that the Writings of the School-men were ex-
 cellent Argument and Authority to determine
 their perſuaſions; I muſt conſider their wri-
 tings and obſerve their defaultances, their con-
 tradictions, the weakneſs of their Arguments,
 their miſ-allegations of Scripture, their inconſe-
 quent deductions, their falſe opinions, and all
 the weakneſſes of humanity, and the failings
 of their perſons, which no good man is willing
 to do unleſs he be compell'd to it by a pretence
 that they are infallible, or that they are follow-
 ed by men even into errors or impiety. And
 therefore ſince there is enough in the former
 ſtatutes, to cure any ſuch miſperſuaſion and
 prejudice, I will not inſtance in the innumerable

Strom. l. 1.
 c. 6.

particularities that might perſuade us to keep our Liberty intire or to uſe it diſcreetly. For it is not to be denyed but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, & *probabile eſt quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod ſapientibus videtur*; If one wiſe man ſays a thing, it is an Argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation, that is, proportionable to ſuch aſſent as the Authority of a wiſe man can produce, and when there is nothing againſt it that is greater; and ſo in proportion higher and higher as more wiſe men (ſuch as the old Doctors were) do affirm it. But that which I complain of is that we look upon wiſe men that lived long ago with ſo much veneration and miſtake, that we reverence them not for having been wiſe men, but that they lived long ſince. But when the Queſtion is concerning Authority there muſt be ſomething to build it on; a Divine Commandment, humane Sanction, excellency of ſpirit, and greatneſs of underſtanding on which things all humane Authority is regularly built. But now if we had lived in theſe times (for ſo we muſt look upon them now, as they did who without prejudice beheld them) ſuppoſe we ſhould then have beheld them, as we in *England* look on thoſe Prelates, who are of great reputation for learning and ſanctity here only is the difference; when perſons are living, their authority is depressed by their perſonal deſaillances, and the contrary intereſt of their contemporaries, which diſband when they are dead, and leave their credit intire upon the reputation of thoſe excellent Books and monuments of Learning and Piety which are left behind: But beyond this why the Biſhop of *Hippo* ſhall have greater Authority than

the Biſhop of the *Canaries*, *ceteris paribus*, I underſtand not. For did they that liv'd (to inſtance) in St. *Auſtin's* time believe all that he wrote? If they did, they were much to blame, not elſe himſelf was to blame for retracting much of it a little before his death; And if while he lived, his affirmative was no more Authority, than derives from the credit of one very wiſe man, againſt whom alſo very wiſe men were oppoſed; I know not why his Authority ſhould prevail further now; For there nothing added to the ſtrength of his reaſon, ſince that time, but only that he hath been in great eſteem with poſterity: And if that be all, why the opinion of the following Ages, ſhall be of more force than the opinion of the firſt Ages, againſt whom St. *Auſtin* in many things clearly did oppoſe himſelf, I ſee no reaſon; or whether the firſt Ages were againſt him or no, yet that he is approved by the following Ages is no better Argument; for it makes his Authority not to be innate, but derived from the opinion of others, and ſo to be *precaria*, and to depend on others, who if they ſhould change their opinions, and ſuch examples there have been many, then there were nothing left to urge our aſſent to him; which when it was at the beſt, was only this, becauſe he had the good Fortune to be believed by them that came after, he muſt be ſo ſtill; and becauſe it was no Argument for the old Doctours before him, this will be very good in his behalf: The ſame I ſay of any company of them, I ſay not ſo of all of them, it is to no purpoſe to ſay it, for there is the Queſtion this day in conteſtation, in the execution of which all the old Writers did conſent: In the aſſignation of the Canon of Scripture,

they never did conſent for ſix hundred years together, and then by that time the Biſhops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently upon that, they fell out in twenty more; and except it be in the Apoſtles Creed, and Article of ſuch nature, there is nothing which may with any colour be called a conſent, much leſs Tradition Univerſal.

Numb. 4.

4. But I will rather chuſe to ſhew the uncertainty of this Topick by ſuch an Argument which was not in the Fathers power to help ſuch as makes no invaſion upon their great reputation, which I deſire ſhould be preſerved as ſacred as it ought. For other things, let who pleaſe read Mr. *Daille du vray uſage des Peres*. But I ſhall only conſider that the Writings of the Fathers have been ſo corrupted by the intermixture of Hereticks, ſo many falſe books put forth in their names, ſo many of their Writings loſt which would more clearly have explicated their ſenſe, and at laſt an open profeſſion made and a trade of making the Fathers ſpeak, not what themſelves thought, but what other men pleaſed, that it is a great inſtance of God's providence and care of his Church, that we have ſo much good preſerved in the Writings which we receive from the Fathers, and that all truth is not as clear gone, as is the certainty of their great Authority and reputation.

Numb. 5.

The publiſhing Books with the inſcription of great names began in St. *Paul's* time; for ſome had troubled the Church of *Theſſalonica* with a falſe Epistle in St. *Paul's* name againſt the inconvenience of which he arms them in 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 1. And this increaſed daily in the Church.

Apolog. Athanas. ad Constant. Bant.

The *Arrians* wrote an Epistle to *Conſtantine*, under the name of *Athanaſius*, and the *Eutychians*

wrote

wrote againſt *Cyril of Alexandria* under the
 name of *Theodoret*; and of the Age in which
 the ſeventh Synod was kept, *Erasmus* reports, Vid. Baron.
 A.D. 553.
Chriſ falſo celebrium virorum titulo commenda-
ſcatere omnia. It was then a publick buſineſs,
 and a trick not more baſe than publick: But
 was more ancient than ſo, and it is memora-
 ble in the Books attributed to *St. Baſil*, contain-
 ing thirty Chapters *de Spiritu Sancto*, whereof
 ſeven were plainly added by another hand
 under the covert of *St. Baſil*, as appears in the
 difference of the ſtile, in the impertinent digreſſi-
 ons, againſt the cuſtom of that excellent man,
 ſome paſſages contradictory to others of *St.*
Baſil, by citing *Meletius* as dead before him,
 who yet lived three * years after him, and by the * Vid. Baron.
 in Annal.
 very frame and manner of the diſcourſe; and
 that it was ſo handſomly carried, and ſo well
 ſuited the purpoſes of men, that it was quoted
 under the title of *St. Baſil* by many, but without
 naming the number of chapters, and by *St. John*
Chryſoſtom in theſe words, *Baſilius in opere tri-* L. I. de ima-
 gin. orat. I.
capitulum de Spiritu S. ad Amphilochium,
 and to the ſame purpoſe, and in the number
 27 and 29. chapters he it is cited by * *Photius*, * Nomocan.
 tit. I. cap. 3.
Euthymius, by *Burchard*, by *Zonaras*, *Bala-*
am and *Nicephorus*; but for this ſee more in
Erasmus's Preface upon this Book of *St. Baſil*.
 There is an Epistle goes ſtill under the name of
Hierom ad Demetriadem virginem, and is of
 great uſe in the Queſtion of Predeſtination, with
 ſeveral appendices, and yet a very † learned man † V. Beda de
 gratia Chryſi
 adv. Julii-
 anum.
 ſome years ago did believe it to be written by a
 Pelagian, and undertakes to confute divers parts
 of it, as being high and confident *Pelagianiſm*, Greg. Arim.
 in 2 ſent. diſt.
 26. q. 1. a. 3.
 and written by *Julianus Epiſc. Eclanenſis*, but
Gregorius Ariminenſis from *St. Auſtin* affirms it

to have been written by *Pelagius* himſelf. I might inſtance in too many; There is not any one of the Fathers who is eſteemed Author of any conſiderable number of Books, that hath eſcaped untouched; But the abuſe in this kind hath been ſo evident that now if any intereſſed perſon of any ſide be preſſed with an Authority very pregnant againſt him, he thinks to eſcape by accusing the Edition, or the Author, or the hands it paſſed through, or at laſt he therefore ſuſpects it, becauſe it makes againſt him: both ſides being reſolv'd that they are in the right, the Authorities that they admit, they will believe not to be againſt them; and they which are too plainly againſt them, ſhall be no Authorities: And indeed the whole world hath been ſo much abuſed that every man thinks he hath reaſon to ſuſpect whatſoever is againſt him, that is, what he pleaſe; which proceeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability in ſuch Allegations.

Numb. 6. But there is a worſe miſchief than this, beſides thoſe very many which are not yet diſcovered, which like the peſtilence deſtroys in the dark, and grows into inconvenience more inſenſibly and more irremediably, and that is, corruption of particular places, by inserting words and altering them to contrary ſenſes: A thing which the Fathers of the ſixth General Synod complain'd of concerning the conſtitutions of *St. Clement*, *quibus jam olim ab iis qui a fidè aliena ſentiunt adulterina quædam etiam pietate aliena introducta ſunt quæ divinorum nobis Decretorum elegantem & venuſtam ſpeciem obſcurarunt*: And ſo alſo have his Recognitions, ſo have his Epistles been uſed, if at leaſt they were his at all,

particu-

Can. 2.

particularly the fifth Decretal Epistle that goes under the name of St. Clement, in which community of Wives is taught upon the Authority of St. Luke saying the first Christians had all things common; if all things, then Wives also by the Epistle; a forgery like to have been made by some *Nicolaitan*, or other impure person: There is an Epistle of Cyril extant to Irenaeus Bishop of *Diocæsarea*, in which he relates that he was asked by *Budus* Bishop of *Emesa*, whether he did approve of the Epistle of *Athanasius* to *Epictetus* Bishop of *Corinth*, and that his answer was, *Si hæc apud vos scripta non sint adultera: Nam plura ex his ab hæreticis Ecclesiaprehenduntur esse depravata:* and this was done even while the Authors themselves were alive; for so *Dionysius* of *Corinth* complain'd that his writings were corrupted by Hereticks, and Pope *Leo*, that his Epistle of *Flavianus* was perverted by the Greeks: And the Synod of *Constantinople* before quoted (the second Synod) *Macarius* and his Disciples were convicted *quod Sanctorum testimonia aut truncata aut depravarint:* Thus the third Chapter of *Cyprian's* Book *de unitate Ecclesiæ* in the Edition of *Pamelius* suffered great alteration: these words [*Primatus Petro datur*] wholly inserted, and these [*super Cathedram Petri fundata Ecclesia*] and whereas it was before, *super quam edificat Ecclesiam Christus*, that not being enough they have made it *super [illum] unum.* Now these Additions are against the faith of old Copies, before *Minutius* and *Pamelius*, and against *Gratian*, even after himself had been assisted by the Roman Correctors, the Commentaries of *Gregory XIII.* as is to be seen where these words are alledged, *Decret. c. 24. Q. 1.*

Enseb. l. 4. c. 23.

Act. 8. vid. etiam Synod. 7. act. 4.

Annot. Cyprian.
an. ſuper. Con-
cil. Carthag.
n. 1.

can. loquitur Dominus ad Petrum. So that we may ſay of Cyprian's works as *Pamelius* himſelf ſaid concerning his writings and the writings of other of the Fathers, *unde colligimus* (ſaith he) *Cypriani ſcripta ut & aliorum Veterum à librariis variè fuiſſe interpolata.* But *Gratian* himſelf could do as fine a feat when he liſted, or elſe ſome body did it for him, and it was in this very Queſtion, their beloved Article of the Popes Supremacy; for *de pœnit. diſt. 1. c. poteſt fieri.* he quotes theſe words out of *St. Ambroſe*, *Non habent Petri hereditatem qui non habent Petri ſedem; fidem, not ſedem,* it is in *St. Ambroſe*; but this error was made authentick by being inſerted into the Code of the Law of the Catholick Church; and conſidering how little notice the Clergy had of Antiquity, but what was tranſmitted to them by *Gratian*, it will be no great wonder that all this part of the world ſwallowed ſuch a bole and the opinion that was wrapped in it. But I need not inſtance in *Gratian* any further, but refer any one that deſires to be ſatiſfied concerning this Collection of his, to *Augustinus* Archbiſhop of *Tarracon* in *emendatione Gratiani*, where he ſhall find ſopperies and corruptions good ſtore noted by that learned man: But that the *Indices Expurgatorii* commanded by Authority, and practiſed with publick liſenſe profeſs to alter and correct the ſayings of the Fathers and to reconcile them to the Catholick ſenſe by putting in and leaving out, is ſo great an Impoſture, ſo unchriſtian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all Books and all Authors juſtly to be ſuſpected; For conſidering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had moſt of the Copies in their own hands, together with an unſatiſfiable deſire of prevailing in their

Vid. Ind. Expurg. Belg. in Bertram. & Fland. Hiſpan. Portugal. Neopolitan. Romanum. Junium in præfat. ad Ind. Expurg. Belg. Haſſenauſſerum, p. 275. Wiſhing-ton Apolog. num. 449.

their right or in their wrong, they have made an absolute destruction of this Topick, and when the Fathers speak * Latin or breath in a Roman Dioceſs, although the providence of God does infinitely over-rule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the Monuments of Antiquity, there is no more found that can pretend for their advantage than there is, which indeed is infinitely inconsiderable: Yet our Questions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied instead of a probable and reasonable determination. For since the Latines always complain'd of the Greeks for privately corrupting the Ancient Records both of Councils and † Fathers, and now the Latins make open profession not of corrupting, but of correcting their writings (that is the word) and at the most it was but a humane Authority, and that of persons not always learned, and very often deceived; the whole matter is so unreasonable, that it is not worth a further discussion. But if any one desires to enquire further, he may be satisfied in *Erasmus*, in *Henry* and *Robert Stephens*, in the Prefaces before the Editions of Fathers, and their Observation upon them: in *Bellarmino de script. Eccles.* in Dr. *Reynolds, de libris Apocryphis*, in *Scaliger*, and *Robert Coke of Leeds in York-shire*, in his Book *de Censura Patrum*.

* Vid. *Leſtor Andream Criſtoſum in Bel-lo Jeſuitico*, & *Joh. Reynolds in lib. de Idol. Rom.*

† Vid. *Ep. Nicolai ad Michael. Imperat.*

SECT.

S E C T. IX.

Of the incompetency of the Church in its diffusive capacity to be judge of Controversies, and the impertinency of that pretence of the Spirit.

Numb. 1.

AND now after all these considerations of the several Topicks, Tradition, Councils, Popes and ancient Doctors of the Church, I suppose it will not be necessary, to consider the authority of the Church apart. For the Church either speaks by Tradition, or by a representative Body in a Council, by Popes or by the Fathers: For the Church is not a *Chimera*, not a shadow but a company of Men believing in Jesus Christ, which Men either speak by themselves immediately, or by their Rulers, or by their Proxies and Representatives; now I have considered it in all senses but in its diffusive capacity; in which capacity she cannot be supposed to be a Judge of Controversies, both because in that capacity she cannot teach us, as also because if by a Judge we mean all the Church diffused in all its parts and members, so there can be no controversy, for if all men be of that opinion, then there is no question contested; if they be not all of a mind, how can the whole diffusive Catholic Church be pretended in defiance of any one article, where the diffusive Church being divided, part goes this way, and part another? But if it be said the greatest part must carry it; Besides that it is impossible for us to know which way the greatest part goes in many questions, it is not always true that the greater part is the best, sometimes the contrary is most certain, and it is often very

very probable, but it is always poſſible. And when paucity of followers was objected to *Liberius*, he gave this in answer, There was a time when Theod. 1. 2. c. 16. hiſt. but three Children of the Captivity reſiſted the Kings Decree. And *Athanaſius* wrote on pur- Tom. 2. poſe againſt thoſe that did judge of truth by multitudes, and indeed it concerned him ſo to do, when he alone ſtood in the gap againſt the numerous Armies of the Arrians.

But if there could in this caſe be any diſtinct Numb. 2. conſideration of the Church, yet to know which the true Church is ſo hard to be found out, that the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom are judg'd before you can get to your Judge, and then there is no need of him. For thoſe queſtions which are concerning the Judge of queſtions muſt be determined before you can ſubmit to his Judgment, and if you can your ſelves determine thoſe great queſtions which conſiſt much in univerſalities, then alſo you may determine the particulars as being of leſs difficulty. And he that conſiders how many notes there are given to know the true Church, no leſs than 15 by *Bellarmino*, and concerning every one of them almoſt whether it be a certain note or no there are very many queſtions and uncertainties, and when it is reſolved which are the notes, there is more diſpute about the application of theſe notes than of the *Πρωτοκρινόμενον*, will quickly be ſatiſfi'd that he had better ſit ſtill than to go round about a difficult and troubleſome paſſage, and at laſt get no further, but return to the place from whence he firſt ſtoot. And there is one note amongſt the reſt, ſimplicity of Doctrine, that is, ſo as to have nothing falſe either in *Doctrina fidei* or *morum*, (for *Bellarmino* explicates it) which ſuppoſes all our Controverſies, judged before they can be tried

tryed by the Authority of the Church, and when we have found out all true Doctrines (for that is neceſſary to judge of the Church by, that as St. *Auſtin's* council is *Eccleſiam in verbis Chriſti inveſtigemus*) then we are bound to follow becauſe we judge it true, not becauſe the Church hath ſaid it, and this is to judge of the Church by her Doctrine, not of the Doctrine by the Church. And indeed it is the beſt and only way; But then how to judge of that Doctrine will be afterwards inquired into. In the mean time, the Church, that is, the Governours of the Churches are to judge for themſelves, and for all thoſe who cannot judge for themſelves. For others, they muſt know that their Governours judge for them too, ſo as to keep them in peace and obedience, tho' not for the determination of their private perſuaſions. For the Oeconomy of the Church requires that her Authority be received by all her Children. Now this Authority is divine in its original, for it derives immediately from Chriſt, but it is humane in its miniſtration. We are to be led like Men not like beaſts; a rule is preſcrib'd for the Guides themſelves to follow, as we are to follow the Guides; and although in matters indeterminable or ambiguous the preſumption lies on behalf of the Governours, (for we do nothing for authority if we ſuffer it not to weigh that part down of an indifferency and a queſtion which ſhe chooſes) yet if there be *error manifeſtus*, as it often happens, or if the Church-Governors themſelves be rent into innumerable ſects, as it is this day in Chriſtendom, then we are to be as wiſe as we can in chooſing our Guides, and then to follow ſo long as that reaſon remains for which we firſt choſe them. And even in that Government which was an immediate ſanction of God, I mean the Ec-

cleſi-

ecclesiastical government of the Synagogue, where God had consign'd the High Priests authority with a menace of death to them that should disobey, that all the world might know the meaning and extent of such precepts, and that there is a limit beyond which they cannot command, and we ought not to obey; it came once to that pass, that if the Priest had been obeyed in his Conciliary degrees, the whole Nation had been bound to believe the condemnation of our blessed Saviour have been just, and at another time the Apostles must no more have preached in the name of Jesus Christ. But here was manifest error. And the same is the same to every man that invincibly and therefore innocently believes it so. *Deopotius quam minibus* is our rule in such cases. For although every Man is bound to follow his Guide, unless he believes his Guide to mislead him; yet when he sees reason against his Guide, it is best to follow his reason: For though in this he may fall into error, yet he will escape the sin; he may do violence to truth, but never to his own conscience; and an honest error is better than an hypocritical profession of truth, or a violent luxation of the understanding, since if he retains his honesty and simplicity, he cannot err in a matter of Faith or of absolute necessity; Gods goodness hath secur'd all the best and careful persons from that; for other things, he must follow the best Guides he can, and he cannot be obliged to follow better than God hath given him.

And there is yet another way pretended of interpreting the Holy Scriptures, and that is, by private Explications of Scripture, and that is, by the Spirit. But of this I shall say no more, but that is impertinent as to this question. For put case the Spirit is given to some men enabling them to pronounce infallibly, yet because this is but a private

Numb. 3.

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vate assistance, and cannot be proved to others this infallible assistance may determine my own assent, but shall not enable me to prescribe to others, because it were unreasonable I should, unless I could prove to him that I have the Spirit and so can secure him from being deceived, if he relies upon me. In this case I may say as St. Paul in the case of praying with the Spirit, *He verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified.* So that let this pretence be as true as it will, it is sufficient that it cannot be of consideration in this question.

Numb. 4.

The result of all this; Since it is not reasonable to limit and to prescribe to all Mens understandings by any external rule in the interpretation of difficult places of Scripture which is our rule. Since no Man nor company of Men is secure from error, or can secure us that they are free from malice, interest and design; and since all the way by which we usually are taught, as Tradition, Councils, Decretals, &c. are very uncertain in the matter, in their authority, in their being legitimate and natural, and many of them certainly false, and nothing certain but the divine authority of Scripture, in which all that is necessary is plain, and a much of that that is not necessary is very obscure, intricate and involv'd, either we must set up our rest, only upon Articles of Faith and plain places, and be incurious of other obscurer revelations, (which is a duty for persons of private understandings, and of no publick function) or if we will search further (to which in some measure the Guides of others are obliged) it remains we inquire how Men may determine themselves, so as to do their duty to God, and not to disserve the Church, that every such man may do what he is bound to, in his personal capacity, and as he relates to the publick as a publick minister.

S E C T.

S E C T. X.

the authority of Reason, and that it proceeding upon best grounds is the best judge.

HERE then I consider, that although no Man *Numb. 1.*

may be trusted to judge for all others, unless this person were infallible and authorized so to do, which no Man nor no company of Men is, yet every Man may be trusted to judge for himself. I say every Man that can judge at all, (as for others they are to be saved as it pleaseth God) and others that can judge at all must either choose their Guides who shall judge for them, (and then they oftentimes do the wisest, and always save themselves a labour, but then they choose too) or if they be persons of greater understanding, they are to choose for themselves in particular, what the others do in general, and by following their guide; and for this any Man may be better trusted for himself than any Man can be for another: For in this case his own interest is most concerned; and ability is not so necessary as honesty, which certainly every Man will preserve in his own case, and to himself, and if he does not, it's he that must smart for it) and it is not required of us not to be in error, but that we endeavour to avoid it.

He that follows his Guide so far as his reason *Numb. 2.*

goes along with him, or which is all one, he follows his own reason (not guided only by natural Arguments, but by Divine Revelation, and all other good means) hath great advantages over him that gives himself wholly to follow a humane Guide whosoever, because he follows
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all their reasons and his own too; he follows them till reason leaves them, or till it seems so to him, which is all one to his particular, for by the confession of all sides, an erroneous Conscience binds him, when a right guide does not bind him. But he that gives himself up wholly to a guide is oftentimes (I mean, if he be a discerning person) forc'd to do violence to his own understanding, and to lose all the benefit of his own discretion, that he may reconcile his reason to his guide. And of this we see infinite inconveniences in the Church of *Rome*, for we find persons of great understanding, oftentimes so amused with the authority of their Church, that it is pity to see them sweat in answering some objections, which they know not how to do, but yet believe they must, because the Church hath said it. So that if they read, study, pray, search records, and use all the means of art and industry in the pursuit of truth, it is not with a resolution to follow that which shall seem truth to them, but to confirm what before they did believe: and if any argument shall seem unanswerable against any Article of their Church, they are to take it for a temptation, not for an illumination, and they are to use it accordingly: which makes them make the Devil to be the Author of that which God's Spirit hath assisted them to find in the use of lawful means and the search of truth. And when the Devil of falshood is like to be cast out by Gods Spirit, they say that it is through *Beelzebub*; which was one of the worst things that ever the Pharisees said or did: And was it not a plain stifling of the just and reasonable demands made by the Emperour, by the Kings of *France* and *Spain*, and by the ablest Divines among them which was used in the Council of

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Trent, when they demanded the reſtitution of Priests to their liberty of marriage, the use of the Chalice, the Service in the vulgar Tongue; and these things not only in pursuance of Truth, but for other great and good ends, even to take away an infinite scandal and a great schism? And yet when they themselves did profess it; and all the world knew these reasonable demands were denyed meerly upon a politick consideration, yet that these things should be fram'd into articles, and decrees of faith, and they forever after bound not only not to desire the same things, but to think the contrary to be divine truths: never was Reason made more a slave or more useſſes. Must not all the world say, either they must be great hypocrites, or do great violence to their understanding, when they not only cease from their claim, but must also believe to be unjust? If the use of their reason had not been restrained by the tyranny and imperiousness of their guide, what the Emperour, and the Kings and their Theologues would have done, they can best judge who consider the reasonableness of the demand, and the unreasonableness of the denial. But we see many wise men who with their *Optandum eſſet ut Eccleſia licentiam daret, &c.* proclaim to all the world, that in some things they consent and do not consent, and do not heartily believe what they are bound publicly to profess, and they themselves would clearly see a difference, if a contrary decree should be fram'd by the Church, they would with an infinite greater confidence rest themselves in other propositions than what they must believe as the Church now stands, and they would find that the authority of a Church is a prejudice as often as a hindrance, and the modest use of reason is a temptation,

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3. God

Numb. 3.

3. God will have no man preſſed with anothers inconveniences in matters ſpiritual and intellectual, no mans ſalvation to depend upon another, and every tooth that eats ſowre grapes ſhall be ſet on edge for it ſelf, and for none elſe: and this is remarkable in that ſaying of God by the Prophet, *If the Prophet ceases to tell my people of their ſins, and leads them into error, the people ſhall die in their ſins, and the blood of them I will require at the hands of that Prophet*: Meaning, that God hath ſo ſet the Prophets to guide us, that we alſo are to follow them by a voluntary aſſent by an act of choice and election. For although accidentally and occaſionally the ſheep may periſh by the ſhepherds fault, yet that which hath the chiefſt influence upon their final condition, is their own act and election, and therefore God hath ſo appointed guides to us, that if we periſh, it may be accounted upon both our ſcores, upon our own and the guides too, which ſays plainly, that although we are intruſted to our guides, yet we are intruſted to our ſelves too. Our guides muſt direct us, and yet if they fail, God hath not ſo left us to them, but he hath given us enough to our ſelves to diſcover their failings, and our own duties in all things neceſſary. And for other things we muſt do as well as we can. But it is beſt to follow our guides, if we know nothing better; but if we do, it is better to follow the pillar of fire, than a pillar of cloud, though both poſſibly may lead to *Canaan*: But then alſo it is poſſible that it may be otherwiſe. But I am ſure if I do my own beſt, then if it be beſt to follow a Guide, and if it be alſo neceſſary I ſhall be ſure by Gods grace and my own endeavour, to get to it; But if I without the particular engagement of my own underſtanding, follow a guide,

Ezek. 33.

guide, poſſibly I may be guilty of extream negligence, or I may extinguiſh Gods Spirit, or do violence to my own reaſon. And whether intruſting my ſelf wholly with another, be not a laying up my talent in a napkin, I am not ſo well ſuſſured. I am certain the other is not. And ſince another mans answering for me will not hinder, that I alſo ſhall answer for my ſelf; as it concerns him to ſee he does not wilfully miſguide me, ſo it concerns me to ſee that he ſhall not if I can help it, if I cannot it will not be required of my hands: whether it be his fault, or his inevitable error, I ſhall be charg'd with neither.

4. This is no other than what is enjoyned as a duty. For ſince God will be juſtified with a free obedience, and there is an obedience of understanding as well as of will and affection, it is of great concernment, as to be willing to believe whatever God ſays, ſo alſo to enquire diligently whether the will of God be ſo as is pretended. Eſpecially our acts of underſtanding are acts of choice, and therefore it is commanded as a duty, to ſearch the Scriptures, to try the ſpirits whether they be of God or no, of our ſelves to be able to judge what is right, to try all things, and to retain that which is good.

For he that reſolves not to conſider, reſolves not to be careful whether he have truth or falſhood, and therefore hath an affection indifferent to truth or falſhood, which is all one as if he did chooſe amiſs; and ſince when things are truly propounded and made reaſonable and intelligible we cannot but aſſent, and then it is no thanks to God; we have no way to give our wills to God in matters of belief, but by our induſtry in ſearching it and examining the grounds upon which the propounders build their dictates. And the doing it is oftentimes a cauſe that God gives a

Mat. 15. 10.

Joh. 5. 40.

1 Joh. 4. 1.

Ephes. 5. 17.

Luk. 24. 25.

Rom. 3. 11.

1. 28.

Apoc. 2. 2.

Act. 17. 11.

man over *εις τον αδελφον*, into a reprobate and undiscerning mind and understanding.

Numb. 5.

Lib. 3.

5. And this very thing (though men will not understand it) is the perpetual practice of all men in the world that can give a reasonable account of their faith. The very Catholick Church it self is *rationalibus & ubiq; diffusa*, faith *Optatum* reasonable, as well as diffused, every where. For take the Profelytes of the Church of Rome, even in their greatest submission of understanding, they seem to themselves to follow their reason most of all. For if you tell them, Scripture and Tradition are their rules to follow, they will believe you when they know a reason for it, and if they take you upon your word, they have a reason for that too, either they believe you a learned man, or a good man, or that you can have no ends upon them, or something that is on an equal height to fit their understandings. If you tell them they must believe the Church, you must tell them why they are bound to it, and if you quote Scripture to prove it, you must give them leave to judge, whether the words alledged speak your sense or no, and therefore to dissent if they say no such thing. And although all men are not wise, and proceed discreetly, yet all make their choice some way or other. He that chooses to please his fancy takes his choice as much, as he that chooses prudently. And no man speaks more unreasonably, than he that denies to men the use of their Reason in choice of their Religion. For that I may by the way remove the common prejudice, Reason and Authority are not things incompetent or repugnant, especially when the Authority is infallible and supreme; for there is no greater reason in the world than to believe such an authority. But then we must consider whether

whether every authority that pretends to be ſuch, is ſo indeed. And therefore *Deus dixit, ergo hoc verum eſt*, is the greateſt demonſtration in the world for things of this nature. But it is not ſo in humane Dictates, and yet reaſon and humane authority are not enemies. For it is a good argument for us to follow ſuch an opinion, becauſe it is made ſacred by the Authority of Councils and Eccleſiaſtical Tradition, and ſometimes it is the beſt reaſon we have in a queſtion, and then it is to be ſtrictly followed; but there may alſo be at other times a reaſon greater than it that ſpeaks againſt it, and then the Authority muſt not carry it. But then the difference is not between reaſon and authority, but between this reaſon and that, which is greater: For authority is a very good reaſon, and is to prevail, unleſs a ſtronger comes and diſarms it, but then it muſt give place. So that in this queſtion by [*Reaſon*] I do not mean a diſtinct Topick, but a transcendent that runs through all Topicks; for Reaſon, like Logick, is inſtrument of all things elſe, and when Revelation, and Philoſophy, and publick Experience, and all other grounds of probability or demonſtration have ſupplied us with matter, then Reaſon does but make uſe of them; that is, in plain terms, there being ſo many ways of arguing, ſo many ſects, ſuch differing intereſts, ſuch variety of Authority, ſo many pretences, and ſo many falſe beliefs, it concerns every wiſe Man to conſider which is the beſt argument, which propoſition relies upon the trueſt grounds: and if this were not his only way, why do Men diſpute and urge arguments, why do they cite Councils and Fathers, why do they alledge Scripture and Tradition, and all this on all ſides, and to contrary purpoſes? If we muſt judge, then we muſt uſe

our reason ; if we must not judge, why do they produce evidence? Let them leave disputing and decree propositions magisterially, but then we may choose whether we will believe them or no; or if they say we must believe them, they must prove it, and tell us why. And all these disputes concerning Tradition, Councils, Fathers, &c. are not arguments against or besides reason, but contestations and pretences to the best arguments, and the most certain satisfaction of our reason. But then all these coming into question, submit themselves to reason, that is, to be judged by humane understanding, upon the best grounds and information it can receive. So that Scripture, Tradition, Councils, and Fathers, are the evidence in a question, but Reason is the Judge: That is, we being the persons that are to be persuaded, we must see that we be persuaded reasonably, and it is unreasonable to assent to a lesser evidence, when a greater and clearer is propounded, but of that every man for himself is to take cognisance if he be able to judge, if he be not, he is not bound under the tye of necessity to know any thing of it; that, that is necessary shall be certainly conveyed to him, God that best can, will certainly take care for that; for if he does not, it becomes to be not necessary; or if it should still remain necessary, and he damned for not knowing it, and yet to know it be not in his power, then who can help it? there can be no further care in this business. In other things, there being no absolute and prime necessity, we are left to our liberty to judge that way that makes best demonstration of our piety and of our love to God and truth, not that way that is always the best argument of an excellent understanding, for this may be a blessing, but the other only is a duty.

And

And now that we are pitch'd upon that way *Numb. 6.*
 which is moſt natural and reaſonable in determination of our ſelves rather than of queſtions, which are often indeterminable, ſince right reaſon proceeding upon the beſt grounds it can, viz. of divine revelation and humane authority, and probability is our guide, (*ſtando in humanis*) and ſuppoſing the aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit (which he never denies them that fail not of their duty in all ſuch things in which he requires truth and certainty) it remains that we conſider how it comes to paſs that men are ſo much deceived in the uſe of their reaſon, and choice of their Religion, and that in this account we diſtinguiſh thoſe accidents which make error innocent from thoſe which make it become a hereſy.

S E C T. XI.

Of ſome cauſes of Errour in the exerciſe of Reaſon which are inculpate in themſelves.

THen I conſider, that there are a great many *Numb. 1.*
 inculpable cauſes of Errour, which are arguments of humane imperfections, not convictions of a ſin. And (1.) the variety of humane underſtandings is ſo great, that what is plain and apparent to one, is difficult and obſcure to another; one will obſerve a conſequent from a common principle, and another from thence will conclude the quite contrary. When St. Peter ſaw the viſion of the ſheet let down with all ſorts of beaſts in it, and a voice ſaying, *Surge Petre, macta & manduca*, if he had not by a particular aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance been directed to the meaning of the ho-
 ly Ghost, poſſibly he might have had other ap-
 prehenſions of the meaning of that viſion, for to
 my ſelf it ſeems naturally to ſpeak nothing but
 the abolition of the Moſaical rites, and the reſti-
 tution of us to that part of Chriſtian liberty which
 conſiſts in the promiſcuous eating of meats;
 and yet beſides this, there want not ſome under-
 ſtandings in the world, to whom theſe words
 ſeem to give Saint *Peter* a power to kill heretical
 Princes. Methinks it is a ſtrange underſtanding
 that makes ſuch extractions, but *Boxius* and *Baro-
 ninus* did ſo. But men may underſtand what
 they pleaſe, eſpecially when they are to expound
 Oracles. It was an argument of ſome wit, but
 of ſingularity of underſtanding, that hapned in
 the great conteſtation between the Miſſals of
 Saint *Ambroſe* and Saint *Gregory*. The lot was
 thrown, and God made to be Judge, ſo as he was
 tempted to a miracle, to answer a queſtion which
 themſelves might have ended without much
 trouble. The two Miſſals were laid upon the
 Altar, and the Church door ſhut and ſealed. By
 the morrow Mattins they found St. *Gregory's* Miſ-
 ſal torn in pieces (ſaith the ſtory) and thrown a-
 bout the Church, but St. *Ambroſe's* open'd and
 laid upon the Altar in a poſture of being read.
 If I had been to judge of the meaning of this Mi-
 racle, I ſhould have made no ſcruple to have
 ſaid it had been the will of God that the Miſſal of
 St. *Ambroſe* which had been anciently uſed, and
 publickly tryed and approved of, ſhould ſtill be
 read in the Church, and that of *Gregory* let alone,
 it being torn by an Angelical hand as an argu-
 ment of its imperfection, or of the inconvenience
 of innovation. But yet they judg'd it other-
 wiſe, for by the tearing and ſcattering about,

they thought it was meant, it ſhould be uſed o-
 ver all the World, and that of St. *Ambroſe* read
 only in the Church of *Millain*. I am more ſatis-
 ſied that the former was the true meaning, than
 am of the truth of the ſtory: But we muſt ſup-
 poſe that. And now there might have been eter-
 nal diſputings about the meaning of the miracle,
 and nothing left to determine, when two fancies
 are the litigants, and the conteſtations about pro-
 babilities *hinc inde*. And I doubt not this was one
 ſort of ſo great variety of opinions in the Primi-
 tive Church, when they proved their ſeveral
 opinions which were myſterious queſtions of
 Chriſtian Theology, by testimonies out of the
 ſcruſer Prophets, out of the Pſalms and Canti-
 cles, as who pleaſe to obſerve their Arguments
 diſcourſe and actions of Council ſhall perceive
 they very much uſed to do. Now although mens
 underſtandings be not equal, and that it is fit the
 ſt underſtandings ſhould prevail, yet that will
 ſatisfie the weaker underſtandings, becauſe
 men will not think that another underſtanding
 better than his own, or at leaſt not in ſuch a par-
 ticular, in which with fancy he hath pleaſed him-
 ſelf. But commonly they that are leaſt able, are
 moſt bold, and the more ignorant is the more con-
 fident, therefore it is but neceſſary if he would
 have another bear with him, he alſo ſhould bear
 with another, and if he will not be preſcribed to,
 neither let him preſcribe to others. And there
 is the more reaſon in this, becauſe ſuch modeſty
 is commonly to be deſir'd of the more imperfect;
 wiſe Men know the ground of their perſua-
 ſion, and have their confidence proportionable
 to their evidence, others have not, but over-aſt
 their trifles: and therefore I ſaid it is but a reaſo-
 nable demand, that they that have the leaſt reaſon
 ſhould

ſhould not be moſt imperious; and for others it being reaſonable enough, for all their great advantages upon other men, they will be ſoon perſuaded to it; for although wiſe men might be bolder, in reſpect of the perſons of others leſs diſcerning, yet they know there are but few things ſo certain as to create much boldneſs and confidence of aſſertion. If they do not, they are not the Men I take them for.

Numb. 2.

2. When an action or opinion is commenc'd with zeal and piety againſt a known vice or a vitious perſon, commonly all the miſtakes of it's proceeding are made ſacred by the holineſs of the principle, and ſo abuſes the perſuaſions of good People, that they make it as a Characteriſtick note to diſtinguiſh good perſons from bad, and then whatever error is conſecrated by this means, is therefore made the more laſting, becauſe it is accounted holy, and the perſons are not eaſily accounted hereticks, becauſe they erre upon a pious principle. There is a memorable inſtance in one of the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendom, viz. concerning Images. For when *Philippicus* had eſpied the Images of the ſix firſt Synods upon the front of a Church, he cauſed them to be pulled down; Now he did it in hatred of the ſixth Synod: For he being a Monotheliſt ſtood condemn'd by that Synod. The Catholicks that were zealous for the ſixth Synod, cauſed the Images and repreſentments to be put up again, and then ſprung the Queſtion concerning the lawfulness of Images in Churches; *Philippicus* and his party ſtrived by ſuppreſſing Images to do diſparagement to the ſixth Synod: the Catholicks to preſerve the honour of the ſixth Synod, would uphold Images. And then the queſtion came to be changed, and they who were eaſie enough

Vid. Paulum
Diaconum.

be perſuaded to pull down Images, were over-
 ſhadowed by a prejudice againſt the *Monothelites*,
 and the *Monothelites* ſtriv'd to maintain the ad-
 vantage they had got by a juſt and pious pretence
 againſt Images. The *Monothelites* would have ſe-
 cur'd their error by the advantage and conſocia-
 tion of a truth, and the other would rather de-
 ſert a dubious and diſputable error, than loſe
 and let go a certain truth. And thus the caſe
 ſeem'd good, and the Succeſſors of both parts were led
 on principally. For when the heresy of the *Mono-*
thelites diſbanded, (which it did in a while after)
 the opinion of the Iconoclaſts, and the que-
 ſtion of Images grew ſtronger. Yet ſince the I-
 conoclaſts at the firſt were Hereticks, not for their
 breaking Images, but for denying the two
 Willſ of Chriſt, his Divine and his Humane: that
 they were called Iconoclaſts was to diſtinguiſh
 their opinion in the queſtion concerning the Ima-
 ges, but that then Iconoclaſts ſo eaſily had the re-
 putation of Hereticks, was becauſe of the other
 opinion which was conjunct in their perſons;
 which opinion men afterwards did not eaſily diſ-
 tinguish in them, but took them for Hereticks in
 general, and whatſoever they held to be heretical.
 And thus upon this prejudice grew great advan-
 tages to the veneration of Images, and the per-
 ſons at firſt were much to be excuſed, becauſe
 they were miſguided by that which might have
 led the beſt men. And if *Epiphanius* who was
 ſo zealous againſt Images in Churches as *Philippi-*
us or *Leo Iſaurus*, had but begun a publick con-
 troverſy, and engaged Emperours to have made
 decrees againſt them, Chriſtendom would have
 other apprehenſions of it, than they had when
Monothelites began it. For few Men will en-
 deavour to ſee a truth from the mouth of the Devil, and if
 the

the person be suspected, so are his ways too. And it is a great subtlety of the Devil so to temper truth and falshood in the same person, that truth may lose much of its reputation by its mixture with error, and the error may become more plausible by reason of its conjunction with truth. And this we see by too much experience, for we see many truths are blasted in their reputation because persons whom we think we hate upon just grounds of Religion, have taught them. And it was plain enough in the case of *Maldonat*, that said of an explication of a place of Scripture, that it was most agreeable to Antiquity, but because *Calvin* had so expounded it, he therefore chose a new one. This was malice. But when a prejudice works tacitely, undiscernably, and irresistibly of the person so wrought upon, the man is to be pityed not condemned, though possibly his opinion deserves it highly. And therefore it hath been usual to discredit doctrines by the personal defailances of them that preach them, or with the disreputation of that sect that maintains them in conjunction with other perverse doctrines. *Faustus* the Manichee in *St. Austin*, glories much, that in their Religion God was worshipped purely and without Images. *St. Austin* liked it well, for so it was in his too, but from hence *Sanders* concludes, that to pull down Images in Churches was the heresie of the Manichees. The Jews endure no Images, therefore *Bellarmin* makes it to be a piece of Judaism to oppose them. He might as well have concluded against saying our Prayers, and Church Musick, that it was Judaical, because the Jews used it. And he would be loth to be served so himself, for he that had mind to use such arguments, might with much better probability conclude against their Sacraments.

In cap. 6. Johan.

L. 20. c. 3.
cont. *Faustum*
Man. L. 1. c.
ult. de Imagin.

De reliq. SS.
l. 2. c. 6. Sect.
Nicolaus.

ment of extreme unction, becauſe when the miraculous healing was ceaſed, then they were not Catholicks, but Hereticks that did transfer it to the uſe of dying perſons, (ſays *Irenæus*;) for ſo L. i. c. 8. adv. har. did the *Valentinians*: And indeed this argument ſomething better than I thought for at firſt, becauſe it was in *Irenæus* time reckoned among the heresies. But there are a ſort of men that are ſet on with them, and hate ſome good things which the Church of *Rome* teaches, becauſe ſhe who teaches ſo many errors, hath been the publisher, and is the practicer of thoſe things. I confeſs the thing is always unreaſonable, but ſometimes it is invincible and innocent; and then may ſerve to abate the fury of all ſuch decratory ſentences, as condemn all the World but their own Diſciples.

3. There are ſome opinions that have gone Numb. 3. and in hand with a bleſſing, and a prosperous profeſſion; and the good ſucceſs of their defenders hath amused many good people, becauſe they thought they heard Gods voice where they ſaw Gods hand, and therefore have ruſhed upon ſuch opinions with great piety and as great miſtaking. For where they once had entertained a fear of God, and apprehenſion of his ſo ſenſible declaration, ſuch a fear produces ſcruple, and a ſcrupulous conſcience is always to be pityed, becauſe though it is ſeldom wiſe, it is always pious. And this very thing hath prevail'd ſo far upon the underſtandings even of wiſe men, that *Bellarmino* takes it a note of the true Church. Which opinion when it prevails is a ready way to make, that inſtead of Martyrs all men ſhould prove Hereticks or Apoſtates in perſecution; for ſince men in miſery are very ſuſpicious, out of ſtrong deſires to find out the cauſe, that by removing it

it they may be relieved, they apprehend that to be it that is firſt preſented to their fears; and then if ever truth be afflicted, ſhe ſhall alſo be deſtroyed. I will ſay nothing in defiance of this fancy, although all the experience in the world ſays it is falſe, and that of all men Chriſtians ſhould leaſt believe it to be true, to whom a perpetual croſs is their certain expectation, (and the argument is like the Moon, for which no garment can be fit, it alters according to the ſucceſs of humane affairs, and in one age will ſerve a Pa-piſt, and in another a Proteſtant) yet when ſuch an opinion does prevail upon timorous perſons, the malignity of their error (if any be conſequent to this fancy, and taken up upon the reputation of a proſperous hereſy) is not to be conſidered ſimply and nakedly, but abatement is to be made in a juſt proportion to that fear, and to that apprehenſion.

Numb. 4.

4. Education is ſo great and ſo invincible a prejudice, that he who maſters the inconvenience of it, is more to be commended than he can juſtly be blaſm'd that complies with it. For Men do not always call them principles which are the prime fountains of reaſon, from whence ſuch conſequents naturally flow, as are to guide the actions and diſcourſes of men; but they are principles which they are firſt taught, which they ſuck'd in next to their Milk, and by a proportion to thoſe firſt principles they uſually take their eſtimate of propoſitions. For whatſoever is taught to them at firſt they believe infinitely, for they know nothing to the contrary, they have had no other maſters, whoſe theorems might abate the ſtrength of their firſt perſuaſions, and it is a great advantage in thoſe caſes to get poſſeſſion; and before their firſt principles can be diſlodg'd,

they

they are made habitual and complexional, it is
in their nature then to believe them, and this is
helped forward very much by the advantage of
more and veneration which we have to the first
parents of our persuasions. And we see it in the
orders of Regulars in the Church of *Rome*. That
opinion which was the opinion of their Patron or
founder, or of some eminent Personage of the
Institute, is enough to engage all the Order to be
of that opinion; and it is strange that all the Do-
minicans should be of one opinion in the matter
of Predetermination and immaculate conception,
and all the Franciscans of the quite contrary, as if
their understandings were form'd in a different
mould, and furnished with various principles by
their very rule. Now this prejudice works by
many principles, but how strongly they do pos-
sess the understanding is visible in that great in-
fluence of the affection and perfect persuasion the
greater sort of people have to that which they
call the Religion of their Fore-Fathers. You may
well charm a Fever asleep with the noise of
bells, as make any pretence of Reason against
that Religion which old Men have entail'd upon
their Heirs male so many generations till they
can prescribe. And the Apostles found this to
be almost true in the extremest difficulty they met
with, to contest against the rites of *Moses*, and
the long superstition of the Gentiles, which they
therefore thought fit to be retain'd, because they
had done so formerly, *Pergentes non quo eundem*
sed quo itur, and all the blessings of this life
which God gave them, they had in conjun-
tion with their Religion, and therefore they
deemed it was for their Religion, and this per-
suasion was bound fast in them with ribs of Iron;
the Apostles were forc'd to unloose the whole

*Optima rati-
ea qua magno
assensu, recep-
ta sunt quo-
rumq; exempla
multa sunt,
nec ad ratio-
nem, sed ad si-
militudinem
vivimus. Sen.
Vid. Minut.
Ecl. octav.*

con-

conjuncture of parts and principles in their understandings, before they could make them malleable and receptive of any impresses. But the observation and experience of all wise men can justify this truth. All that I shall say to the present purpose, is this, that consideration is to be had to the weakness of persons when they are prevail'd upon by so innocent a prejudice, and when there cannot be arguments strong enough to over-master an habitual persuasion bred with a man, nourish'd up with him, that always eat at his table, and lay in his bosom, he is not easily to be called Heretick, for if he keeps the foundation of faith, other articles are not so clearly demonstrated on either side, but that a man may innocently be abused to the contrary. And therefore in this case to handle him charitably, is but to do him justice: And when an opinion *in minoribus articulis*, is entertain'd upon the title and stock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, since upon no better stock nor stronger arguments, most men entertain their whole Religion, even Christianity it self.

Numb. 5.

5. There are some persons of a differing persuasion, who therefore are the rather to be tolerated, because the indirect practices and impostures of their adversaries have confirmed them, that those opinions which they disavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of God's appointment: For it is no unreasonable discourse to say, that God will not be served with a Lye, for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to support all those truths which he hath commanded, and hath supplied every honest cause with enough for its maintainance, and to contest against its adversaries. And (but that it is) they which use indirect arts will not be willing to

ſe any of their unjuſt advantages, nor yet be
 charitable to thoſe perſons, whom either to gain
 or to undoe, they leave nothing unattempted)
 the Church of *Rome* hath much reaſon not to be
 decreetory in her ſentences againſt perſons of a
 differing perſuaſion, for if their cauſe were en-
 tirely the cauſe of God, they have given wiſe
 people reaſon to ſuſpect it, becauſe ſome of them
 have gone to the Devil to defend it. And if it
 be remembred what tragedies were ſtirred up a-
 gainſt *Luther*, for ſaying the Devil had taught
 him an argument againſt the Maſs, it will be of as
 great advantage againſt them, that they go to the
 Devil for many arguments to ſupport not only
 the Maſs, but the other diſtinguiſhing Articles of
 their Church: I inſtance in the notorious forging
 of Miracles, and framing of falſe and ridiculous
 legends. For the former I need no other in-
 ſtances than what happened in the great conte-
 ſtation about the immaculate conception, when
 there were Miracles brought on both ſides to
 prove the contradictory parts; and though it be
 more than probable that both ſides play'd the
 jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to
 be diſcovered, and the actors burned at *Berne*.
 I impoſt this diſcovery happened by providence; for
 the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of pro-
 bability than the Franciſcan; is clearly more con-
 ſiſtent both to Scripture and all Antiquity, and
 if ſo much of it is acknowledged by the greateſt Pa-
 triarchs themſelves, as *Salmeron*, *Peſa* and *Wadding*,
 means that becauſe they played the Knaves in a juſt que-
 reſtion, and uſed falſe arts to maintain a true pro-
 poſition, God Almighty, to ſhew that he will not
 be ſerved by a lye, was pleaſed rather to diſcover
 but that impoſture in the right opinion than in the
 wrong, ſince nothing is more diſhonourable to God,
 R than

than to offer a ſin in ſacrifice to him, and nothing more incongruous in the nature of the thing, than that truth and falſhood ſhould ſupport each other, or that true doctrine ſhould live at the charges of a lye. And he that conſiders the arguments for each opinion will eaſily conclude, that if God would not have truth confirmed by a lye, much leſs would he himſelf atteſt a lye with a true miracle. And by this ground it will eaſily follow, that the Franciſcan party, although they had better luck than the Dominicans, yet had not more honeſty, becauſe their cauſe was worſe, and therefore their arguments no whit the better. And although the argument drawn from miracles is good to atteſt a holy doctrine, which by its own worth will ſupport it ſelf, after way is a little made by miracles. yet of it ſelf and by its own reputation it will not ſupport any fabrick; for inſtead of proving a doctrine to be true, it makes that the miracles themſelves are ſuſpected to be illuſions, if they be pretended in behalf of a doctrine, which we think we have reaſon to account falſe. And therefore the Jews did not believe Chriſts doctrine for his Miracles, but diſbelieve the truth of his Miracles, becauſe they did not like his doctrine. And if the holineſs of his doctrine, and the Spirit of God by inſpirations and infuſions, and by that which *St. Peter* calls *a ſurer word of prophecy*, had not atteſted the Divinity both of his Perſon and his Office, we ſhould have wanted many degrees of confidence which now we have upon the truth of Chriſtian Religion. But now ſince we are fore-told by this *ſurer word of prophecy*, that is, the prediction of Jeſus Chriſt, that Antichriſt ſhould come in all wonders, and ſigns, and lying miracles, and that the Church ſaw much of that already verified in

Vid. Baron.
A. D. 68. n.
22. Philo-
ſtrat. l. 4. T.
485. com-
pend. Ce-
ſaren. p. 202.

in *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and *Mane-*
the, and divers * Hereticks, it is now come to
 that paſs, that the argument in its beſt advan-
 tage proves nothing ſo much as that the doctrine
 which it pretends to prove, is to be ſuſpected,
 becauſe it was foretold that falſe doctrine ſhould
 be obtruded under ſuch pretences. But then
 when not only true miracles are an inſufficient
 argument to prove a truth ſince the eſtabliſhment
 of Chriſtianity, but that the miracles themſelves
 are falſe and ſpurious, it makes that doctrine in
 whoſe defence they come, juſtly to be ſuſpected,
 becauſe they are a demonſtration that the intere-
 ſted perſons uſe all means, leave nothing unat-
 tempted to prove their propoſitions, but ſince
 they ſo fail as to bring nothing from God, but
 ſomething from the Devil for its juſtification,
 it's a great ſign that the doctrine is falſe, becauſe
 we know the Devil, unleſs it be againſt his will,
 does nothing to prove a true propoſition that
 makes againſt him. And now then thoſe perſons
 who will endure no man of another opinion,
 might do well to remember how by their exor-
 ciſms, their Devils tricks at *Loudun*, and the o-
 ther ſide pretending to cure mad folks and per-
 ſons bewitched, and the many discoveries of
 their juggling, they have given ſo much reaſon to
 their adverſaries to ſuſpect their doctrine, that
 either they muſt not be ready to condemn their
 perſons who are made ſuſpicious by their indi-
 rect proceeding in attestation of that which they
 value ſo high as to call their Religion, or elſe
 they muſt condemn themſelves for making the
 ſcandal active and effectual.

* Stapleton:
 prompt. Mo-
 ral. pars æſti-
 va, p. 627.

As for falſe Legends, it will be of the ſame *Numb. 4.*
 conſideration, becauſe they are falſe Testimonies
 of Miracles that were never done, which differs

only from the other as a lye in words from a lye in action, but of this we have witneſſs enough in that decree of Pope *Leo* the X. Seſſion the eleventh, of the laſt *Lateran* Council, where he excommunicates all the forgers and inventors of viſions and falſe miracles, which is a teſtimony that it was then a practice ſo publick as to need a Law for its ſuppreſſion; and if any man ſhall doubt whether it were ſo or no, let him ſee the *Cenſuræ* *gravamina* of the Princes of *Germany* where it is highly complain'd of. But the extreme ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs of the inventors of lying ſtories is ſo great, as to give occaſion to ſome perſons to ſuſpect the truth of all * Church ſtory, witneſs the Legend of *Lombardy*: of the Author of which the Biſhop of the *Canaries* gives this Teſtimony, *In illo enim libro miraculorum moniſtra ſæpius quam vera miracula legas. Hanc homines ſcripſit ferrei oris, plumbei cordis, animi cæte perſarum ſeveri & prudentis.* But I need not deſcend ſo low, for St. *Gregory* and *V. Bede* themſelves reported miracles, for the authority of which they only had the report of the common people and it is not certain that St. *Hierom* had ſo much in his ſtories of St. *Paul* and St. *Anthony*, and the *Fauns* and the *Satyrs* which appear'd to them and deſired their Prayers. But I ſhall only in way of eminency, note what Sir *Thomas More* ſays in his Epistle to *Ruthal* the Kings Secretary before the Dialogue of *Lucian* [*Philopſeudes*] that therefore he undertook the tranſlation of the dialogue, to free the World from a ſuperſtition that crept in under the face and title of Religion. For ſuch lyes (ſays he) are tranſmitted to us with ſuch authority that a certain impoſſibility had perſuaded St. *Auſtin*, that the very fact which *Lucian* ſcoffs, makes ſport withal in the

* τὰ γὰρ μὴ
εἰρημύνα
ἐν βίαις
μυθῶν, καὶ τὰ
ἀβέλους
εἰρημύνα
ἱεροποιεῖν
ὡς παρὰ
ὁ δὲ ἀδύνατον
Iſid. Peſuſ.

Vid. l. II.
loc. Theol.
cap. 6.

Canus ibid.

* D

Dialogue was a real story, and acted in his own
 The Epistle is worth the reading to this
 purpose; but he says this abuse grew to such a
 height, that scarce any life of any Saint or Mar-
 is truly related, but is full of lyes and lying
 wonders, and some persons thought they served
 if they did honour to God's Saints by inven-
 some prodigious story, or miracle for their
 computation. So that now it is no wonder if the
 pious men are apt to believe, and the great-
 historians are easie enough to report such sto-
 lying, which serving to a good end, are also con-
 by the report of persons, otherwise pious
 prudent enough. I will not instance in Vin-
 his *speculum*, *Turonensis*, *Thomas Cantimpra-*
us, *John Herolt*, *Vita Patrum*, nor the reve-
 of St. *Bridget*, though confirm'd by two
Martin V. and *Boniface IX.* even the best
 most deliberate amongst them, *Lippoman*,
descendens, *Lipfius*, *Bzovius*, and *Baronius* are so full of
 that they cause great disreputation to the
 monuments and records of Antiquity, and
 do no advantage to the cause under which
 serve and take pay. They do no good
 and much hurt; but yet accidentally they may
 procure this advantage to charity, since they do
 only to faith; that since they have so abused the
 of story that our confidences want much
 that support we should receive from her re-
 of antiquity, yet the men that dissent and
 scandaliz'd by such proceedings should be ex-
 if they should chance to be afraid of truth
 of hath put on garments of imposture: and
 much violence is done to the truth and cer-
 of their judging, let none be done to their
 of judging: since they cannot meet a right
 let them have a charitable judge. And

* Viz. De duo-
 bus spiritalis, al-
 tero decedente,
 altero in vitam
 redeunte post
 viginti dies,
 quam in aliis
 nominibus vi-
 det *Lucianus*.
 Vide etiam
 argumentum
Gilberti Cognati,
 in *Annotat.*
 in hunc *Dialog.*

Vid. *Palaeor.*
 de sacra sin-
 done, part 1.
 Epist. ad Le-
 ctor.

ſince it is one very great argument againſt *Simon Magus* and againſt *Mahomet* that we can prove their miracles to be impoſtures, it is much to be pitied if timorous and ſuſpicious perſons ſhall invincibly and honeſtly leſs apprehend a truth which they ſee conveyed by ſuch a testimony which we all uſe as an argument to reprove the Mahumetan ſuperſtition.

Numb. 7.

6. Here alſo comes in all the weakneſſes and trifling prejudices which operate not by their own ſtrength, but by advantage taken from the weakneſs of ſome underſtandings. Some men by a Proverb or a common ſaying are determin'd to the belief of a propoſition, for which they have no argument better than ſuch a Proverbial ſentence. And when divers of the common People in *Jeruſalem* were ready to yield their underſtandings to the belief of the Meſſias, they were turn'd clearly from their apprehenſions by that Proverb, *look and ſee, does any good thing come from Galilee?* And this, *when Chriſt comes, no man knows from whence he is;* but this Man was known of what Parents, of what City. And thus the weakneſs of their underſtanding was abuſed, and that made the argument too hard for them. And the whole Seventh Chapter of *St. John's* Goſpel is a perpetual inſtance of the efficacy of ſuch trifling prejudices, and the vanity and weakneſs of popular underſtandings. Some whole Ages have been abuſed by a definition, which being once received, as moſt commonly they are upon flight grounds, they are taken for certainties in any ſcience reſpectively, and for principles, and upon their reputation men uſe to frame concluſions, which muſt be falſe or uncertain according as the definitions are. And he that hath obſerved any thing of the weakneſſes of Men, and the

the ſucceſſions of groundleſs doctrines from age to age, and how ſeldom definitions which are put into ſyſtemes, or that derive from the Fathers, or approved among School-men are examined by perſons of the ſame intereſts, will bear me witneſs, how many and great inconveniences preſs hard upon the perſuaſions of men, who are abuſed and yet never conſider who hurt them. Others, and they very many, are led by authority or examples of Princes, and great perſonages, *Numquis credis ex Principibus?* Some by the reputation of one learned man are carried into any perſuaſion whatſoever. And in the middle and latter Ages of the Church, this was the more conſiderable, becauſe the infinite ignorance of the Clerks, and the men of the long robe gave them over to be led by thoſe few guides which were mark'd to them by an eminency, much more than their ordinary: which alſo did the more amuſe them, becauſe moſt commonly they were fit for nothing but to admire what they underſtood not; their learning then was in ſome ſkill in the Maſter of the Sentences, in *Aquinas* or *Scotus* whom they admir'd next to the moſt intelligent order of Angels; hence came opinions that made Sects and diviſion of names, Thomiſts, Scotiſts, Albertiſts, Nominals, Reals, and I know not what monſters of names; and whole families of the ſame opinion, the whole inſtitute of an Order being ingag'd to believe according to the opinion of ſome leading man of the ſame Order, as if ſuch an opinion were impoſed upon them in *virtute ſanctæ obedientiæ*. But this inconvenience is greater when the principle of the miſtake runs higher, when the opinion is deriv'd from a Primitive man and a Saint, for then it often happens that what at firſt was but a plain innocent

Joh. 7.

ſeduction comes to be made ſacred by the veneration which is conſequent to the perſon for having lived long ago; and then, becauſe the perſon is alſo ſince canoniz'd, the error is almoſt made eternal, and the cure deſperate. Theſe and the like prejudices which are as various as the miſeries of humanity or the variety of humane underſtandings are not abſolute excuſes, unleſs to ſome perſons, but truly if they be to any, they are exemptions to all, from being preſſed with too peremptory a ſentence againſt them, eſpecially if we conſider what leave is given to all men by the Church of *Rome* to follow any one probable Doctor in an opinion which is conteſted againſt by many more. And as for the Doctors of the other ſide, they being deſtitute of any pretences to an infallible *medium* to determine queſtions, muſt of neceſſity allow the ſame liberty to the people, to be as prudent as they can in the choice of a fallible guide; and when they have choſen, if they do follow him into error, the matter is not ſo inextinguishable for being deceiv'd in uſing the beſt guides we had, which guides becauſe themſelves were abuſed, did alſo againſt their wills deceive me. So that this prejudice may be eaſier abuſed, becauſe it is almoſt like a duty to follow the dictates of a probable Doctor, or if it be over-acted or accidentally paſs into an inconvenience, it is therefore to be excuſed becauſe the principle was not ill, unleſs we judge by our event, not by the antecedent probability. Of ſuch men as theſe it was ſaid by St. *Auſtin*, *Cate-*
ram turbam non intelligendi vivacitas, ſed creden-
di ſimplicitas tutiſſimam facit. And Gregory Na-
zianzen, *ὅτι πολλὰκις τὴν λαὸν τὸ ἁβασάνισον.* The
 common ſort of people are ſafe in their not in-
 quiring by their own induſtry, and in the ſimple
 city

Contr. Fund.
 cap. 4.

Orat. 21.

city of their underſtanding relying upon the beſt
 ſides they can get.

But this is of ſuch a nature in which as we may *Numb. 6.*
 culpably be deceived, ſo we may turn it into
 vice or a deſign, and then the conſequent er-
 rors will alter the property, and become here-
 ſies. There are ſome men that have mens per-
 ſons in admiration becauſe of advantage, and
 ſome that have itching Ears, and heap up teach-
 ings to themſelves. In theſe and the like caſes
 the authority of a perſon, and the prejudices of
 great reputation is not the excuſe but the fault:
 and a Sin is ſo far from excuſing an Error, that
 Error becomes a ſin by reaſon of it's relation to
 that Sin as to it's parent and principle.

S E C T. XII.

*The innocency of Error in opinion in a pious
 Perſon.*

AND therefore as there are ſo many inno- *Numb. 1.*
 cent cauſes of Error, as there are weak-
 neſſes within and harmleſs and unavoidable pre-
 judices from without, ſo if ever error be procu-
 red by a vice it hath no excuſe, but becomes ſuch
 a crime, of ſo much malignity, as to have influ-
 ence upon the effect and conſequent, and by com-
 munication makes it become criminal. The A-
 poſtles noted two ſuch cauſes: *Covetouſneſs* and
Envy, the former in them of the Circumci-
 ſion, and the latter in *Diotrephes* and *Simon Ma-*
gus; and there were ſome that were ἀρόμυροι ἐπιθυ- *2 Tim. 3.*
ποικίλαις, they were of the long robe too, but
 they

they were the ſhe-Diſciples, upon whoſe Conſciences ſome falſe Apoſtles had influence by advantage of their wantonneſs, and thus the three principles of all ſin become alſo the principles of hereſie, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. And in purſuance of theſe arts the Devil hath not wanted fuel to ſet a work incendiaries in all Ages of the Church. The Biſhops were always honourable, and moſt commonly had great revenues, and a Biſhoprick would ſatiſfie the two deſigns of Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and this hath been the golden Apple very often contended for, and very often the cauſe of great fires in the Church. *Thebulis quia rejeſtus ab Episcopatu Hieroſolymitano, turbare cœpit Eccleſiam*, ſaid *Egeſippus* in *Eusebius*. *Tertullian* turn'd Montaniſt in diſcontent for miſſing the Biſhoprick of Carthage after *Agrippinus*, and ſo did *Montanus* himſelf for the ſame diſcontent, ſaith *Nicephorus*. *Novatus* would have been Biſhop of Rome, *Donatus* of Carthage, *Arrius* of Alexandria, *Aerius* of *Sebaſtia*, but they all miſſed, and therefore all of them vexed Chriſtendom. And this was ſo common a thing, that oftentimes, the threatning the Church with a ſchiſm, or a hereſie, was a deſign to get a Biſhoprick; And *Socrates* reports of *Asterius*, that he did frequent the Conventicles of the Arrians; *Nam Episcopatum aliquem ambiebat*. And ſetting aſide the infirmities of men, and their innocent prejudices *Epiphanius* makes pride to be the only cauſe of hereſies, ὕβρις καὶ πρεϊκρίς, Pride and Prejudice cauſe them all, the one criminally, the other innocently. And indeed St. *Paul* does almoſt make Pride the only cauſe of hereſies, his words cannot be expounded, unleſs it be at leaſt the principal, καὶ πρὸς ἐπεροδιδασκαλαί, and conſents not to ſound words, and

the doctrine that is according to godliness,
 ἡ δὲ διδασκαλία κατὰ θεοφιλίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτον περὶ ζήσης καὶ λο-
 γισίας, ἐξ ὧν γίνεσθαι φθόνος, ἔρις, βλασφημία, ἰσχυροίαι

The sum is this, If ever an opinion be begun *Numb. 2.*
 with pride, or manag'd with impiety, or ends in
 crime; the man turns Heretick: but let the er-
 ror be never so great, so it be not against an Ar-
 ticle of Creed, if it be simple and hath no confe-
 ration with the personal iniquity of the man,
 the opinion is as innocent as the person, though
 perhaps as false as he is ignorant, and therefore
 will burn though he himself escape. But in these
 cases and many more, (for the causes of decep-
 tion increase by all accidents, and weaknesses,
 and illusions) no man can give certain judgment
 on the persons of men in particular, unless the
 matter of fact and crime be accident and noto-
 rious. The man cannot by humane judgement
 be concluded a Heretick, unless his opinion be
 in open recession from plain demonstrative di-
 vine authority (which must needs be notorious,
 voluntary, vincible and criminal) or that there
 be a palpable serving of an end accidental and
 extrinsecal to the opinion.

But this latter is very hard to be discerned, *Numb. 3.*
 because those accidental and adherent crimes
 which makes the man a Heretick, in questions
 not simply fundamental or of necessary practice,
 are actions so internal and spiritual, that cogni-
 tance can but seldom be taken of them. And
 therefore (to instance) though the opinion of Pur-
 gatory be false, yet to believe it cannot be heresie,
 if a Man be abused into the belief of it invincibly,
 because it is not a Doctrine either fundamentally
 false or practically impious, it neither proceeds
 from the will, nor hath any immediate or di-
 rect

rect influence upon choice and manners. And for those other ends of upholding that opinion which possibly its Patrons may have, as for the reputation of their Churches infallibility, for the advantage of Derges, Requiem, Masses, Monthly minds, Anniversaries, and other offices for the dead, which usually are very profitable, rich and easie, these things may possibly have sole influences upon their understanding, but whether they have or no God only knows. If the proposition and article were true, these ends might justly be subordinate and consistent with a true proposition. And there are some truths that are also profitable, as the necessity of maintenance to the Clergy, the Doctrine of restitution, giving Alms, lending freely, remitting debts in cases of great necessity: And it would be but a ill argument that the preachers of these doctrine speak false, because possibly in these articles they may serve their own ends. For although *Demetrius* and the Crafts-men were without excuse for resisting the Preaching of St. Paul, because it was notorious they resisted the truth upon ground of profit and personal emoluments, and the matter was confessed by themselves, yet the Clergy should maintain their just Rites and Revenues which by pious dedications and donations were long since ascertained upon them, is to be presumed in order of Law and Charity that this end is in the Men subordinate to truth because it is so in the thing it self, and that therefore no judgment in prejudice of these truths can be made from that observation?

Numb. 4.

But if *aliunde* we are ascertain'd of the truth or falshood of a proposition respectively, yet the judgment of the personal ends of the men, cannot ordinarily be certain and judicial, because most

com-

And commonly the acts are private, and the purposes internal, and temporal ends may sometimes consist with truth, and whether the purposes of men make these ends principal or subordinate, no Man can judge; and be they how they are, yet they do not always prove that when they are conjunct with error, that the error is caused by these purposes and criminal intentions.

But in questions practical, the doctrine it self *Numb. 5.* the person too, may with more ease be removed, because matter of fact being evident, and nothing being so certain as the experiments of humane affairs, and these being the immediate contents of such doctrines, are with some more certainty of observation redargued, than the speculative; whose judgment is of it self more distant, more remote from matter and humane observation, and with less curiosity and explicitness declared in Scripture as being of less consequence and concernment in order to Gods and man's great end. In other things which end in idleness and ineffective contemplation, where neither the doctrine is malicious nor the person apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God, and as there is no certainty of humane judicature in this case, so it is to no purpose should be judged. For if the person may be innocent with his Error, and there is no rule whereby he can certainly be pronounced, that he is actually criminal; (as it happens in matters speculative.) Since the end of the Commandment move out of a *pure conscience, and faith unfained*; the Commandment may obtain its end in a consistence with this simple speculative Error, why should Men trouble themselves with such questions, so as to disturb the publick charity

or

or the private confidence? Opinions and perſons are juſt ſo to be judged as other matters and perſons criminal. For no man can judge any thing of himſelf: it muſt be a crime, and it muſt be open, ſo as to take cognizance, and make true humane judgment of it. And this is all I am to ſay concerning the cauſes of heresies, and of the diſtinguiſhing rule for guiding of our judgments towards others.

Numb. 6.

As for guiding our judgments and the uſe of our reaſon in judging for our ſelves, all that is to be ſaid is reducible to this one propoſition. Since errors are then made ſins when they are contrary to charity or inconfiſtent with a good life and the honour of God, that judgment is the trueſt, or at leaſt that opinion moſt innocent, that 1. beſt promotes the reputation of God's Glory, and 2. is the beſt inſtrument of holy living. For in queſtions and interpretations of diſputable things, theſe two analogies are the beſt to make propoſitions, and conjectures and determinations. Diligence and care in obtaining the beſt guides, and the moſt convenient aſſiſtances, prayer, and moſt purity of Spirit ſimplicity of purpoſes and intentions, humility and aptneſs to learn, and a peaceable diſpoſition, are therefore neceſſary to finding out truths, becauſe they are parts of good life, without which our truths will do us but little advantage, and our errors can have no excuſe, but with theſe diſpoſitions as he is ſure to find out what is neceſſary, ſo what truth he inculpably miſtakes of, he is ſure is therefore not neceſſary, becauſe he could not find it when he did his beſt in his moſt innocent endeavours. And this I ſay to ſecure the perſons; becauſe no rule can antecedently ſecure the propoſition in matters diſputable. For even in the proportions and explications of this rule there is infinite variety of diſputable things.

when the diſpute concerning free will, one denies it, becauſe he believes it magnifies the grace of God, that it works irreſiſtibly; the other affirms, becauſe he believes it engages us to greater care and piety of our endeavours. One opinion thinks God reaps the glory of good actions, the other thinks it charges bad actions upon him. So in the queſtion of merit, one part chooſes his aſſertion becauſe it thinks it encourages us to do good works, the other believes it makes us proud, and therefore he rejects it. The firſt believes it increaſes piety, the ſecond believes it increaſes ſpiritual preſumption and vanity. The firſt thinks it magnifies God's juſtice, the other thinks it derogates from his mercy. Now then, ſince neither this nor any ground can ſecure a man from the ſubtlety of miſtaking, we were infinitely miſerable if it would not ſecure us from puniſhment, ſo long as we willingly conſent not to a crime, and do our beſt endeavour to avoid an error. By the way, let me obſerve, that ſince there are ſuch great differences of apprehenſion concerning the conſequents of an article, no man can be charged with the odious conſequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine is, but the perſon is not, if he underſtands not ſuch things to be conſequent to his Doctrine; for if he did, and avows them, they are his direct opinions, and he ſtands as chargeable with them as with his firſt propoſitions; but if he diſ-avows them, he ſhould certainly rather quit his own opinion, than avow ſuch errors or impieties, which are pretended to be conſequent to it, becauſe every man knows that can be no truth, from whence good naturally and immediately does derive, and therefore believes his firſt propoſitions to be true, becauſe

because he believes it innocent of such errors as are charg'd upon it directly or consequently.

Numb. 7. So that now, since no error neither for it self nor its consequents is to be charg'd as criminal upon a pious person, since no simple error is a sin, nor does condemn us before the throne of God, since he is so pitiful to our crimes, that he pardons many *de toto & integro*, in all makes a batement for the violence of temptation, and the surprizal and invasion of our faculties, and therefore much less will demand of us an account for our weaknesses; and since the strongest understanding cannot pretend to such an immunity and exemption from the condition of men, and not to be deceived and confess its weakness; it remains we inquire what deportment is to be used towards persons of a differing persuasion when we are (I do not say doubtful of a proposition, but) convinc'd that he that differs from us is in Error, for this was the first intention, and the last end of this discourse.

S E C T. XIII.

Of the deportment to be used towards persons disagreeing, and the reasons why they are not to be punished with Death, &c.

Numb. 1. **F**OR although every man may be deceived yet some are right and may know it too, for every man that may err, does not therefore certainly err, and if he errs because he recedes from his rule, then if he follows it he may do right and if ever any man upon just grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right and was su

it too, and although confidence is mistaken
for a just persuasion many times, yet some men
are confident, and have reason so to be. Now
when this happens, the question is what deport-
ment they are to use towards persons that disa-
gree from them, and by consequence are in error.
1. Then no Christian is to be put to death, *Numb. 2.*
remembered, or otherwise directly persecuted
for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or
blasphemy. If it plainly and apparently brings
a crime, and himself does act it or encourage
it, then the matter of fact is punishable accord-
ing to its proportion or malignity; as if he
teaches treason or sedition, his opinion is not
an excuse, because it brings in a crime, and a
man is never the less traitor, because he believes
it lawful to commit treason; and a man is a mur-
derer if he kills his brother unjustly, although
he thinks he does God good service in it. Mat-
ters of fact are equally judicable whether the
principle of them be from within or from with-
out. And if a man could pretend to innocence
being seditious, blasphemous, or perjur'd by
persuading himself it is lawful, there were as
great a gate opened to all iniquity, as will en-
tain all the pretences, the designs, the impo-
sibilities, and disguises of the world. And there-
fore God hath taken order that all rules concern-
ing matters of fact and good life shall be so clear-
ly explicated, that without the crime of the man,
he cannot be ignorant of all his practical duty.
And therefore the Apostles and primitive Do-
ctors made no scruple of condemning such per-
sons for Hereticks that did dogmatize a sin. He
that teacheth others to sin, is worse than he that
commits the crime, whether he be tempted by
his own interest, or encouraged by the others
doctrine.

doctrine. It was as bad in *Basilides* to teach to be lawful to renounce Faith and Religion, and take all manner of Oaths and Covenants in time of persecution, as if himself had done so; nay is as much worse, as the mischief is more universal, or as a fountain is greater than a drop of water taken from it. He that writes Treason in Book, or preaches Sedition in a Pulpit, and persuades it to the people, is the greatest Traitor and incendiary, and his opinion there is the fountain of a sin, and therefore could not be entertained in his understanding upon weakness or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot from Scripture or divine revelation have any pretence to colour that so fairly as to seduce either a wise or an honest man. If it rest there and goes no further, it is not cognoscible, and so escapes that way; but if it be published and comes *à stylo ad Macheram* (as *Tertullian's* phrase is) then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in persuasion, and is just so punishable, as is the crime that it persuades: such were they of whom *St. Paul* complains, who brought in damnable doctrines and lusts. *St. Paul's Utinam abscindam* is just of them, take it in any sense of rigour and severity, so it be proportionable to the crime or criminal doctrine. Such were those of whom God spake in *Deut. 13*. If any Prophet tempt to idolatry, saying, Let us go after other Gods he shall be slain. But these do not come into the question. But the proposition is to be understood concerning questions disputable in *materia intellectuali*, which also for all that law of killing such false Prophets were permitted with impunity in the Synagogue, as appears beyond exception in the great divisions and disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadduces. I do

Gal. 5.

but certain and known idolatry or any
 ſort of practical impiety with its princi-
 ple doctrine may be puniſhed corporally, be-
 cauſe it is no other but matter of fact, but no
 matter of meer opinion, no errors that of them-
 ſelves are not ſins are to be perſecuted or pu-
 niſhed by death or corporal inflictions. This is
 to be proved.

All the former diſcourſe is ſufficient argu- *Numb. 3.*
 ment how eaſie it is for us in ſuch matters to be
 deceived. So long as Chriſtian Religion was a
 ſimple profeſſion of the articles of belief, and a
 ſimple proſecution of the rules of good life, the
 clearneſs of the articles and the clearneſs of the
 way was cauſe of the ſeldom prevarication.
 When divinity is ſwell'd up to ſo great a bo-
 dy, when the ſeveral queſtions which the pee-
 ples and wantonneſs of ſixteen ages have
 ſumenc'd, are concentred into one, and from all
 the queſtions ſomething is drawn into the bo-
 dy of *Theology* till it hath aſcended up to the
 ſummit of a mountain, and the ſum of Divi-
 ne collected by *Aquinas*, makes a volume as
 great as was that of *Livy* mock'd at in the
gram,

Quem mea vix totum bibliotheca capit.

It is impoſſible for any induſtry to conſider ſo
 many particulars in the infinite numbers of que-
 ſtions as are neceſſary to be conſider'd before we
 can with certainty determine any. And after
 the conſiderations which we can have in a
 ſhort age, we are not ſure *not to be deceived*.
 The obſcurity of ſome queſtions, the nicety of
 the articles, the intricacy of ſome revelations,
 the variety of humane underſtandings, the
 ſubtilties of *Logick*, the tricks of adverſaries,

the ſubtilty of Sophiſters, the engagement of educations, personal affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinity of authorities, the vaſtneſs of ſome arguments, as conſiſting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the ſeveral degrees of probability, the difficulties of Scripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the oppoſition of all exterior arguments to each other, and their open conteſtation, the publick violence done to authors and records, the private arts and ſupplannings, the falſifyings, the indefatigable induſtry of ſome men to abuſe all underſtandings, and perſuaſions into their own opinions, theſe and thousands more, even all the difficulty of things and all the weakneſſes of man and all the arts of the Devil, have made it impoſſible for any man in ſo great variety of matter not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the Pope, and no man is more deceived than he is in that very particular.

Numb. 4.

3. From hence proceeds a danger which is conſequent to this proceeding, for if we, who are ſo apt to be deceived, and ſo inſecure in our reſolution of queſtions diſputable, ſhould perſecute a diſagreeing perſon, we are not ſure we do not fight againſt God, for if his propoſition be true and perſecuted, then, becauſe all truth derives from God, this proceeding is againſt God, and therefore this is not to be done upon *Calvin's* ground, leſt peradventure we be found to fight againſt God, of which becauſe we can have no ſecurity (at leaſt) in this caſe, we have all the guilt of a doubtfull or an uncertain Conſcience. For if there be no ſecurity in the thing as I have already largely proved, the Conſcience in ſuch caſe is as uncertain as the queſtion is, and if it be doubtfull

doubtful where it is uncertain, it is becauſe the
 man is not wiſe, but as confident as ignorant,
 the firſt without reaſon, and the ſecond without
 uſe. And it is very diſproportionable for a
 man to perſecute another certainly, for a pro-
 ſcription, that if he were wiſe, he would know
 not certain, at leaſt, the other perſon may in-
 ſtantly be uncertain of it. If he be kill'd, he
 certainly kill'd, but if he be call'd Heretick,
 is not ſo certain that he is an Heretick. It
 is good therefore, that proceedings were ac-
 cording to evidence, and the rivers not ſwell
 over the banks, nor a certain definitive ſentence
 of death paſſ'd upon ſuch perſuaſions which can-
 not certainly be defin'd. And this argument is
 ſo much the more force, becauſe we ſee that
 the greateſt perſecutions that ever have been,
 were againſt truth, even againſt Chriſtianity it
 ſelf, and it was a prediction of our bleſſed Savi-
 our, that perſecution ſhould be the lot of true
 believers: and if we compute the experience of
 Chriſtendom, and the prediction, that
 truth ſhould ſuffer, with thoſe few inſtances of
 perſecution againſt Hereticks, it is odds, but perſecution
 is on the wrong ſide, and that it is error and
 falſe, that is cruel and tyrannical, eſpecially
 againſt the truth of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Religi-
 on, who are ſo meek, ſo charitable, and ſo merciful:
 we may in this caſe, exactly uſe the words
 of St. Paul, *But as then, he that was born after the
 ſpirit, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit;*
 ſo it is now: and ſo it ever will be till
 the ſecond coming.

Whoever perſecutes a diſagreeing perſon,
 as I have all the world againſt himſelf, and all pious
 people of his own perſuaſion, when the ſcales
 of authority return to his adverſary, and atteſt

Numb. 5.

*Quo comperto
 illi in noſtram
 perniciem li-
 centiore anda-*

*ria grassabun-
tur. St. Aug.
epist. ad Do-
nat. Proconf.
& Contr. ep.
Fund. ita nunc
debeo sustinere
et tantâ pati-
entia vobis-
cum agere
quanta me-
cum egerunt
proximi mei
cum in vestro
dogmate rabi-
osus ac cæcus
errarem.*

his contradictory; and then what can he urge for mercy for himself, or his party that sheweth none to others? If he says, that he is to be spared because he believes true, but the other was justly persecuted because he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is as confidently believed to be a Heretick, as he believes his adversary such, and whether he be or no, being the thing in question, of this he is not to be his own judge, but he that hath authority on his side, will be found to judge against him. So that what either side can indifferently make use of, it is good that neither would, because neither side can with reason sufficient do it in prejudice of the other. If a man will say, that every man must take his adventure, and if it happens authority to be with him, he will persecute his adversaries, and if it turns against him he will bear it as well as he can and hope for a reward of Martyrdom, an innocent suffering; besides that this is so equal to be said of all sides, and besides, that this is a way to make an eternal disunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Christendom nothing but a shambles, and a perpetual butcher shop, and as fast as mens wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abused, so often there will be new executions and massacres. Besides this, it is most unreasonable and unjust, as being contrariant to those Laws of Justice and Charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeal to spare and preserve an innocent, than to condemn a guilty person, and there is less malice and iniquity in sparing the guilty, than in condemning the good. Because it is in the power of men to remit a guilty person to divine judgement, and for divers causes, not to use severity, but in no case is it lawful, neither hath God

given to man a power to condemn ſuch per-
ſons as cannot be proved other than pious and
innocent. And therefore it is better, if it
ſhould ſo happen, that we ſhould ſpare the in-
nocent perſon, and one that is actually deceiv'd,
than that upon the turn of the wheel, the true
offenders ſhould be deſtroyed.

And this very reaſon, he that had authority *Numb. 6.*
ſufficient, and abſolute to make Laws, was plea-
ſed to urge as a reaſonable inducement for the
eſtabliſhing of that Law which he made for the
punishment of erring perſons. It was in the pa-
rallel of the tares mingled with the good ſeed in
the *dominico* the good ſeed (Chriſt himſelf be-
ing the interpreter) are the Children of the
kingdom, the tares are the Children of the
wicked one, upon this comes the precept, *ga-
ther not the tares by themſelves, but let them both
grow together till the harveſt*, that is, till the day
of judgment. This Parable hath been tortur'd
in vain to make it confeſs its meaning, but we
will ſoon diſpatch it. All the difficulty and va-
riety of expoſition is reducible to theſe two que-
ſtions, What is meant by [*Gather not,*] and
what by [*Tares.*] That is, what kind of ſword
is forbidden, and what kind of perſons are to be
deſtroyed. The former is clear? for the ſpiri-
tual ſword is not forbidden to be uſed to any
kind of criminals, for that would deſtroy the
power of excommunication. The prohibition
therefore lyes againſt the uſe of the temporal
ſword in cutting off ſome perſons. Who they
are is the next difficulty. But by *tares*, or the
children of the wicked one, are meant either per-
ſons of ill lives, wicked perſons only *in re pra-*
ſentata, or elſe another kind of evil perſons, men
innocent or faulty *in re intellectuali*. One or

other of theſe two muſt be meant; a third we know not. But the former cannot be meant, becauſe it would deſtroy all bodies politique which cannot conſiſt without laws, nor laws without a compulſory and a power of the ſword; therefore if criminals were to be let alone till the day of Judgment, bodies politique muſt ſtand or fall *ad arbitrium impiorum*, and nothing good could be protected, not Innocence it ſelf, nor any thing could be ſecure but violence and tyranny. It follows then that ſince a kind of perſons which are indeed faulty are to be tolerated, it muſt be meant of perſons faulty in another kind, in which the Goſpel had not in other places clearly eſtabliſhed a power externally compulſory, and therefore ſince in all actions practically criminal a power of the ſword is permitted, here where it is denied muſt mean a crime of another kind, and by conſequence errors intellectual, commonly call'd Heresy.

Numb. 7.

• Vide St. Chryſoſt. homil. 47. in Cap. 13. Marth. & St. Auguſt. Quæſt. in cap. 13. Mat. S. Cyprian. Ep. lib. 2. Ep. 1. Theophyl. in 13. Matth. S. Hieron. in cap. 13. Mat. ait, per hanc parabolam ſignificari, ne in rebus dubiis præceps fiat judicij.

And after all this the reaſon there given confirms this * interpretation, for therefore it is forbidden to cut off theſe tares, leſt we alſo pull up the wheat with them, which is the ſum of theſe two laſt arguments. For becauſe Heresy is of ſo nice conſideration, and difficult ſentence, in thinking to root up heresies, we may by our mistakes deſtroy true doctrine, which altho' it be poſſible to be done in all caſes of practical queſtion, by miſtake, yet becauſe external actions are more diſcernable than inward ſpeculations and opinions, innocent perſons are not ſo eaſily miſtaken for the guilty, in actions criminal, as in matters of inward perſuaſion. And upon that very reaſon Saint Martin was zealous to have procured a revocation of a Commiſſion granted to ſeveral Tribunes to make enquiry in

Spain for sects and opinions; for under colour of rooting out the Priscilianists, there was much mischief done, and more likely to happen to the Orthodox. For it happened then, as sometimes since, *Palliore potius & veste quam fide hereticus dijudicari solebat aliquando per Tribunos Maximi*. They were no good inquisitors of heretical pravity, so *Sulpitius* witnesses. But secondly, the reason says, that therefore these persons are so to be permitted as not to be persecuted, lest when a revolution of humane affairs sets contrary opinions in the throne or chair, they who were persecuted before, should now themselves become persecutors of others, and so at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be permitted. But as these reasons confirm the Law, and this sense of it, so abstracting from the Law, it is of it self concluding by an argument *ab incommodo*, and that founded upon the principles of justice, and right reason, as I formerly alledged.

4. We are not only uncertain of finding out Numb. 8.

truths in matters disputable, but we are certain that the best and ablest * Doctors of Christendom have been actually deceived in matters of great concernment, which thing is evident in those instances of persons from whose doctrinal lines all sorts of Christians respectively take liberty to dissent. The errors of *Papias*, *Irenaeus*, *Laëtantius*, *Justin Martyr* in the Millennium opinion, of Saint *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the Asian and African Fathers in the question of Rebaptization, Saint *Austin* in his decretory and *serenitate superare. Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt quibus gemitibus fiat ut ex quantalacunque parte possit intelligi Deus. Postremo illi vos saviant qui nullo tali errore decepti sunt, quali vos deceptos vident.* St. August. Contr. Ep. Fund.

* Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniantur, & quam difficile caveantur errores. Illi in vos saviant qui nesciunt quam rarum & arduum sit carnalia phantasmata perire.

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uncharitable ſentence againſt the unbaptized children of Chriſtian parents, the Roman or the Greek Doctors in the queſtion of the proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt, and in the matter of images, are examples beyond exception. Ἀμφὶ δ' ἀνδρῶν φρέσιν Ἀμπλακίαι ἀναείδμητοι κρέμανται. Now if theſe great perſonages had been persecuted or deſtroyed for their opinions, who ſhould have answered the invaluable loſs the Church of God ſhould have ſuſtained in miſſing ſo excellent, ſo exemplary, and ſo great lights? But then if theſe perſons erred, and by conſequence, might have been deſtroyed, what ſhould have become of others whoſe underſtanding was lower, and their ſecurity leſs, their errors more, and their danger greater? At this rate all men ſhould have paſſed through the fire, for who can eſcape when Saint *Cyprian* and St *Auſtin* cannot? Now to ſay theſe perſons were not to be persecuted becauſe although they had errors, yet none condemned by the Church, at that time or before is to ſay nothing to the purpoſe, nor nothing that is true. Not true, becauſe Saint *Cyprian*'s error was condemned by Pope *Stephen*, which in the preſent ſenſe of the prevailing party in the Church of *Rome*, is to be condemned by the Church. Not to the purpoſe; becauſe it is nothing elſe but to ſay that the Church did tolerate their errors. For ſince thoſe opinions were open and manifeſt to the world, that the Church did not condemn them, it was either becauſe thoſe opinions were by the Church not thought to be errors, or if they were, yet ſtill thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring perſon. And if ſhe would do ſo ſtill, it would in moſt caſes be better than now it is. And yet if the Church had condemned them, it had not altered

considered the case as to this question, for either the persons upon the condemnation of their error should have been persecuted or not. If not, why shall they now, against the instance and precedent of those ages who were confessed-wise and pious, and whose practices are often made to us arguments to follow? If yea, and that they had been persecuted, it is the thing which this argument condemns, and the loss of the Church had been invaluable in the losing the provocation and temptation of such personages: and the example and the rule of so ill consequence, that all persons might upon the same ground have suffered, and though some had escaped, yet no man could have any more security from punishment than from error.

5. Either the disagreeing person is in error, *Numb. 9.* or not, but a true believer; in either of the cases to persecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true believer, then it is a clear case that we do open violence to God, and his servants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and stupidity than to give to error the glory of Martyrdom, and the advantages which are accidentally consequent to a persecution? For as it was true of the Martyrs *Quoties* *crimur toties nascimur*, and the increase of their trouble was the increase of their confidence and the establishment of their persuasions: so it is in false opinions; for that an opinion is true or false is extrinsecal or accidental to the consequences and advantages it gets by being afflicted. And there is a popular pity that follows all persons in misery, and that compassion breeds likeness of affections, and that very often produces the weakness of persuasion; and so much the rather, because

because there ariſes a jealousie and pregnant ſuſpicion that they who perſecute an opinion are deſtitute of ſufficient arguments to confute it, and that the hangman is the beſt diſputant. For if thoſe arguments which they have for their own doctrine were a ſufficient ground of confidence and perſuaſion, men would be more willing to uſe thoſe mean arguments which are better compliances with humane underſtanding, which more naturally do ſatiſſie it, which are more humane and Chriſtian, than that way which ſatiſſies none, which deſtroys many, which provokes more, which makes all men jealous. To which add that thoſe who dye for their opinion, leave in all men, great arguments of the heartineſs of their belief, of the confidence of their perſuaſion, of the piety and innocency of their perſons, of the purity of their intention and ſimplicity of purpoſes; that they are perſons totally diſintereſt, and ſeparate from deſign. For no intereſt can be ſo great as to be put in balance againſt a mans life and his ſoul, and he does very imprudently ſerve his ends who ſeeingly and fore-knowingly loſes his life in the proſecution of them. Juſt as if *Titius* ſhould offer to die for *Sempronius* upon condition he might receive twenty talents when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great ſincerity, and a great hope when a man lays down his life in attestation of a propoſition. *Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life,* ſaith our bleſſed Saviour. And although laying of a wager is an argument of confidence more than truth, yet laying ſuch a wager, ſtaking of a mans Soul, and pawning his life gives a hearty teſtimony that the perſon

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is honeſt, confident, reſigned, charitable and noble. And I know not whether truth can do a perſon or a cauſe more advantages, than theſe can do to an error. And therefore beſides the impiety, there is great imprudence in Canonizing a Heretick, and conſecrating an error by ſuch means, which were better preſerv'd as encouragements of truth, and comforts to real and true Martyrs. And it is not amiſs to obſerve that this very advantage was taken by Hereticks who were ready to ſhew and boaſt their Catalogues of Martyrs, in particular the *Circumcellians* did ſo, and the Donatiſts, and yet the firſt were Hereticks, the ſecond Schiſmaticks. And it was remarkable in the Scholars of *Priſcillian*, who, as they had their Maſter in the reputation of a Saint while he was living, ſo when he was dead, they had him in veneration as a Martyr; they with reverence and devotion carryed his, and the bodies of his ſlain companions to an honourable ſepulture, and counted it Religion to ſwear by the name of *Priſcillian*. So that the extinguishing of the perſon, gives life and credit to his doctrine, and when he is dead he yet ſpeaks more effectually.

6. It is unnatural and unreaſonable to perſecute diſagreeing opinions. Unnatural; for Numb. 10. Underſtanding being a thing wholly ſpiritual, cannot be reſtrained, and therefore neither puniſhed by corporal afflictions. It is in *alienâ republicâ*, a matter of another world; you may as well cure the colick by brushing a mans cloaths, or fill a mans belly with a ſyllogiſm: theſe things do not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action nor paſſion; and ſince all puniſhments in a prudent government puniſh

puniſh the offender to prevent a future crime, and ſo it proves more medicinal than vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention: and ſince no puniſhment of the body can cure a diſeaſe in the ſoul, it is diſproportionable in nature, and in all civil government, to puniſh where the puniſhment can do no good. It may be an act of tyranny, but never of juſtice. For is an opinion ever the more true or falſe for being perſecuted? Some men have believed it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and vexed into a reſolution, but the thing it ſelf is not the truer, and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his underſtanding, for ſuch premiſſes can infer no concluſion, but that of a mans life: and a Wolf may as well give laws to the underſtanding, as he whoſe dictates are only propounded in violence, and writ in blood. And a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor diſcourſe in his choice, nor reaſon to ſatiſfie his diſcourſe. And as it is unnatural, ſo it is unreaſonable, that *Sempronius* ſhould force *Caius* to be of his opinion, becauſe *Sempronius* is Conſul this year, and commands the *Liſtors*: As if he that can kill a man cannot but be infallible: and if he be not, why ſhould I do violence to my conſcience, becauſe he can do violence to my perſon?

Numb. 11. 7. Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be ſatiſfied in his reaſon that his opinion is falſe, becauſe diſcountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he liſts, he might

might cure many inconveniences of his life: all his fears and his sorrows would soon disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is persuaded, that such an accident that afflicts him is an evil, and such an object formidable; let him but believe himself impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his sleeps need to be disturbed, nor his quietness discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him an hypocrite, but never to be a right believer, and so instead of erecting a trophee to God and true Religion, we build a Monument for the Devil. Infinite examples are recorded in Church story to this very purpose: But *Socrates* instances in one for all; for when *Eusebius* Bishop of *Cyzicum* was threatned by the Emperor *Valens* with banishment and confiscation, If he did not subscribe to the decree of *Ariminum*, at last he yielded to the *Arrian* opinion, and presently fell into great torment of Conscience, openly at *Cyzicum* recanted the error, asked God and the Church forgiveness, and complain'd of the Emperors injustice, and that was all the good the *Arrian* party got by offering violence to his Conscience. And so many families in *Spain* which are as they call them new Christians, and of a suspected faith, into which they were forc'd by the tyranny of the Inquisition, and yet are secret *Moors*, is evidence enough, of the * inconvenience of preaching a doctrine in *in ore gladii cruentandi*. For it either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or forces him into a bad; it either punishes sincerity,

Ejusmodi sunt Hipponensis conversio, cujus quidem species decepit August. ita ut opinaretur haereticos licet non morte trucidandos vitamencoercendos. Experientia enim demonstravit eos tam facile ad Arianismum transisse atque ad Catholicismum, cum Arriani Principes rerum in ea civitate potirentur.

sincerity, or perſuades hypocrifiſie; it perſecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to diſſemble and to be ſafe, but never to be honeſt.

Numb. 12.

8. It is one of the glories of Chriſtian Religion; that it was ſo pious, excellent, miraculous and perſuaſive, that it came in upon its own piety and wiſdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonſtration of the Spirit; a mighty ruſhing wind to beat down all ſtrong holds, and every high thought and imagination; but towards the perſons of men it was always full of meekneſs and charity, compliance and toleration, condeſcenſion and bearing with one another, *reſtoring perſons overtaken with an error, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering leſt we alſo be tempted.* The conſideration is as prudent, and the propoſition as juſt as the precept is charitable, and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are beſt conſerved with that which gives it the firſt being, and which is agreeable to its temper and conſtitution. That precept which it chiefly dreaches in order to all the bleſſedneſs in the world, that is of meekneſs, mercy and charity, ſhould alſo preſerve it ſelf and promote its own intereſt. For indeed nothing will do it ſo well, nothing doth ſo excellently inſinuate it ſelf into the underſtandings and affections of men, as when the actions and perſuaſions of a ſect, and every part and principle and promotion are univocal. And it would be a mighty diſparagement to ſo glorious an inſtitution, that in its principle it ſhould be merciful and humane, and in the promotion and propagation of it ſo inhumane: And it would be improbable and unreaſonable that the ſword ſhould be uſed

in the perſuaſion of one propoſition, and yet in the perſuaſion of the whole Religion nothing like it. To do ſo, may ſerve the end of a temporal Prince, but never promote the honour of Chriſts Kingdom; it may ſecure a deſign of Spain, but will very much diſſerve Chriſtendom, to offer to ſupport it by that which good men believe to be a diſtinctive cogniſance of the Mahometan Religion, from the excellency and piety of Chriſtianity, whoſe ſenſe and ſpirit is deſcribed in thoſe excellent words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. 2. 24. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* They that oppoſe themſelves, muſt not be ſtricken by any of Gods ſervants; and if yet any man will ſmite theſe who are his oppoſites in opinion, he will get nothing by it, but he muſt quit the title of being a ſervant of God for his pains. And I think a diſtinction between perſons Secular and Eccleſiaſtical will do no advantage for an eſcape, becauſe even the Secular power if it be Chriſtian, and a ſervant of God muſt not be *πλήπικρον Δούλον Κυρίου ἐδεί μάχης*, mean in thoſe caſes where meekneſs of inſtruction is the remedy, or if the caſe be irremediable, abſciſſion by Cenſures is the penalty.

9. And if yet in the nature of the thing it *Numb. 13.* be neither unjuſt nor unreaſonable, yet there is nothing under God Almighty that hath power over the ſoul of man, ſo as to command a perſon, or to judge a diſagreeing: Humane Laws direct all external acts in order to ſeveral ends, and the Judges take cogniſance accordingly, but no man can command the will, or puniſh him, that obeys the Law againſt his will:

will: for becauſe its end is ſerved in external obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be ſerved by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet poſſibly the underſtanding is leſs ſubject to humane power than the will, for that humane power hath a command over external acts which naturally and regularly flow from the will, & *ut plurimum* ſuppoſe a direct act of will, but always either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidental; but the underſtanding is a natural faculty ſubject to no command, but where the command is it felt a reaſon fit to ſatiſſie and perſuade it. And therefore God commanding us to believe ſuch revelations perſuades and ſatiſſies the underſtanding by his commanding and revealing: for there is no greater probation in the world that a propoſition is true, than becauſe God hath commanded us to believe it. But becauſe no man's command is a ſatiſfaction to the underſtanding or a verification of the propoſition, therefore the underſtanding is not ſubject to humane authority. They may perſuade, but not enjoy where God hath not; and where God hath, it appears ſo to him, he is an Infidel if he does not believe it. And if all men have no other efficacy or authority on the underſtanding but by perſuaſion, propoſal and intreaty, then man is bound to aſſent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energy of perſuaſion, neither indeed can he, though he would never ſo fain, and he that out of fear and too much compliance and deſire to be ſafe, ſhall deſire to bring his underſtanding with ſome luxation to the belief of humane dictates and authorities, may as often miſs of the truth as hit it, but is ſure always to loſe the comfort

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truth, becauſe he believes it upon indirect, inſufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his deſire it ſhould be ſo is his beſt argument that it is ſo, ſo the pleaſing of men is his beſt reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted all the poſſeſſion of a truth.

S E C T. XIV.

Of the practice of Chriſtian Churches towards perſons diſagreeing, and when perſecution firſt came in.

AND thus this truth hath been practiſed in *Numb. 1.*
all times of Chriſtian Religion, when there were no collateral deſigns on foot, nor intereſts to be ſerved, nor paſſions to be ſatiſfied. In *St. Paul's* time, though the cenſure of hereſy were not ſo looſe and forward as afterwards, and all that were called Hereticks were ſcarcely ſuch, and highly criminal; yet as their time was, ſo was their cenſure, that is, ſpiritual. They were firſt admoniſhed, once at laſt, for ſo * *Irenæus*, † *Tertullian*, || *Cyprian*, * *L. 3. cap. 2.*
Ambroſe, and † *Hierom* read that place of † *De præſcript.*
Joſeph III. But ſince that time all men, and at || *Lib. ad Quirinum.*
that time ſome read it, *Post unam & alteram* * *In hunc locum.*
monitionem, reject a Heretick. Rejection † *Ibidem.*
from the communion of Saints after two warnings, that's the penalty. Saint *John* expreſſes
by not eating with them, not bidding them
depart ſpeed, but the perſons againſt whom he de-
clares ſo ſeverely, are ſuch as denied Chriſt to
come in the fleſh, direct Antichriſts: and

let the ſentence be as high as it liſts in this caſe, all that I obſerve is, that ſince in ſo damnable doctrines nothing but ſpiritual cenſure, ſeparation from the communion of the faithful was enjoyned and preſcribed, we cannot pretend to an Apoſtolical precedent, if in matters of diſpute and innocent queſtion, and of great uncertainty and no malignity we ſhould proceed to ſentence of death.

Numb. 2. For it is but an abſurd and illiterate arguing, to ſay that excommunication is a greater puniſhment, and killing, a leſs; and therefore whoever may be excommunicated may alſo be put to death (which indeed is the reaſoning that *Bellarmino* uſes) for firſt, excommunication is not directly, and of it ſelf a greater puniſhment than corporal death. Becauſe it is indefinite, and incompleat, and in order to a further puniſhment, which if it happens, then the excommunication was the inlet to it, if it does not the excommunication did not ſignifie half ſo much as the loſs of a member, much leſs death. For it may be totally ineffectual, either by the iniquity of the proceeding, or repentance of the perſon: and in all times and caſes it is a medicine if the man pleaſe; if he will not, but perſeveres in his impiety, then it is he himſelf that brings the Cenſure to effect, that actuates the judgment and gives a ſting, and an energy upon that which otherwiſe would be *χέρ ἀκυρ*. Secondly, but when it is at worſt it does not kill the Soul, it only conſigns it to that death which it had deſerved, and ſhould have received independently from that ſentence of the Church. Thirdly, and yet excommunication is to admirable purpoſe; for whether it refers to the perſon cenſured or no, other

others, it is prudential in it self, it is exemplary to others, it is medicinal to all. For the person censured, is by this means threatned into piety, and the threatning made the more energetical upon him because by fiction of Law, or as it were by a Sacramental representment the pains of hell are made presential to him; and so becomes an act of prudent judicature, and excellent discipline, and the best instrument of spiritual Government: Because the nearer the threatning is reduced to matter, and the more present and circumstantionable it is made, the more operative it is upon our spirits while they are immersed in matter. And this is the full sense and power of excommunication in its direct intention: consequently and accidentally other evils might follow it, as in the times of the Apostles, the censured persons were buffeted by Satan, and even at this day there is less security even to the temporal condition of such person whom his spiritual parents have Anathematiz'd. But besides this, I know no warrant to affirm any thing of excommunication, the sentence of the Church does but declare, without effect the final sentence of damnation. it whoever deserves excommunication deserves damnation; and he that repents shall be saved, although he dye out of the Churches external communion, and if he does not repent, he will be damn'd though he was not excommunicate.

But suppose it greater than the sentence of Numb. 25. temporal death, yet it follows not, because heretics may be excommunicate, therefore kill'd, which from a greater to a less, in a several kind of things, the argument concludes not. It is a better thing to make an excellent discourse

than to make a ſhoo, yet he that can do the greater cannot do this leſs. An Angel cannot beget a man, and yet he can do a greater matter in that kind of operations which we term ſpiritual and Angelical. And if this were concluding that whoever may be excommunicate may be kill'd, then, becauſe of excommunications the Church is confeſſed the ſole and intire Judge, ſhe is alſo an abſolute diſpoſer of the lives of perſons. I believe this will be but ill doctrine in *Spain*: for in *Bullâ Cœna Domini*, the King of *Spain* is every year excommunicated on Maunday Thursday; but if by the ſame power he might alſo be put to death (as upon this ground he may) the Pope might with more eaſe be inveſted in that part of *St. Peter's* patrimony which that King hath invaded and ſurpriz'd. But beſides this, it were extreme harſh Doctrine in a Roman Conſiſtory, from whence excommunications iſſue for trifles, for fees, for not ſuffering themſelves infinitely to be oppreſſed, for any thing; if this be greater than death, how great a tyranny is that which does more than kill men for leſs than trifles, or elſe how inconſequent is that argument which concludes its purpoſe upon ſo falſe pretence and ſuppoſition?

Numb. 4.

Well, however zealous the Apoſtles were againſt Hereticks, yet none were by them, or their dictates put to death. The death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and the blindneſs of *Elymas* the Sorcerer amount not to this, for they were miraculous inflictions: and the firſt was a puniſhment to Vow-breach and Sacrilege, the ſecond of Sorcery, and open conteſtation againſt the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt; neither of them concerned the caſe of this preſent queſtion: or if the caſe were the ſame, yet the authority is

not

not the ſame: For he that inflicted theſe puniſhments was infallible, and of a power competent: but no man at this day is ſo. But as yet, people were converted by Miracles, and Preaching, and Diſputing, and Hereticks by the ſame means were redargued, and all men inſtructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till Chriſtian people were vexed by diſagreeing perſons, and were impatient and peeviſh, by their own too much confidence and the luxuriancy of a proſperous fortune: but when they would not endure perſons that did dogmatize any thing which might intrench upon their reputation or their intereſt. And it is observable that no man, nor no age did ever teach the lawfulness of putting Hereticks to death, till they grew wanton with proſperity. But when the reputation of the Governours was concerned, when the intereſts of men were endangered, when they had ſomething to loſe, when they had built their eſtimation upon the credit of diſputable queſtions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they overvalued themſelves and their own opinions, when ſome perſons invaded Biſhopricks upon pretence of new opinions, then they as they thrived in the favour of Emperours, and in the ſucceſs of their diſputes, ſollicited the temporal power to baniſh, to fine, to impriſon, and to kill their adverſaries.

ſo that the caſe ſtands thus. In the beſt *Numb. 5.* times, amongſt the beſt men, when there were other temporal ends to be ſerved, when Religion and the pure and ſimple deſigns of Chriſtianity were only to be promoted; in thoſe times amongſt ſuch men, no perſecution was uſed, nor perſuaded nor allowed towards diſ-

agreeing perſons. But as men had ends of their own and not of Chriſts, as they receded from their duty, and Religion from its purity, as Chriſtianity began to be compounded with intereſts, and blended with temporal deſigns, ſo men were perſecuted for their opinions. This is moſt apparent, if we conſider when perſecution firſt came in, and if we obſerve how it was checked by the holieſt and the wiſeſt perſons.

Numb. 6. The firſt great inſtance I ſhall note was in *Priſcillian* and his followers, who were condemned to death by the Tyrant *Maximus*. Which inſtance although *St. Hierom* obſerves as a puniſhment, and judgment for the crime of heresy, yet is of no uſe in the preſent queſtion, becauſe *Maximus* put ſome Chriſtians of all ſorts to death promiſcuouſly, Catholick and Heretick without choice, and therefore the *Priſcillianiſts* might as well have called it a judgment upon the Catholicks, as the Catholicks upon them.

Numb. 7. But when *Urſeus* and *Statius*, two Biſhops, procured the *Priſcillianiſts* death by the power they had at Court: *St. Martin* was ſo angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And *St. Ambroſe* upon the ſame ſtock denied his communion to the *Itacianiſts*. And the account that *Sulpitius* gives of the ſtory is this, *Hoc modo* (ſays he) *homines luce indigniſſimo peſſimo exemplo necati ſunt*. The example was worſe than the men. If the men were heretical, the execution of them however was unchriſtian.

Numb. 8. But it was of more authority that the Nicene Fathers ſupplicated the Emperour, and prevailed for the baniſhment of *Arius*, of this we can give no other account, but that by the Hiſtory of the time we ſee baſeneſs enough, and perſonal miſdemeanour, and factionuſneſs of ſpirit in

Solom. l. 1.
c. 20.

Arius,

Arius, to have deſerved worſe than baniſhment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the balance; which we have reaſon to believe was not ſo much as conſidered, becauſe *Conſtantine* gave toleration to differing opinions, and *Arius* himſelf was reſtored upon ſuch conditions to his country and office, which would not ſtand with the ends of the Catholicks, if they had been ſevere exactors of concurrence and union of perſuaſions.

I am ſtill within the ſcene of Eccleſiaſtical perſons, and am conſidering what the opinion of the learnedeſt and the holieſt prelates were concerning this great queſtion. If we will believe *St. Auſtin* (who was a credible perſon) no good man did allow it. *Nullis tamen bonis in Catholicâ hoc placet, ſi uſq; ad mortem in quenquam licet hæreticum ſeviatur.* This was *St. Auſtin's* final opinion; For he had firſt been of the mind that it was not honeſt to do any violence to miſ-perſuaded perſons; and when upon an accident happening in *Hippo* he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then alſo he excepted death, and would by no means have any meer opinion made capital. But for ought appears, *St. Auſtin* had greater reaſon to have retracted that retraction, than his firſt opinion. For his ſaying of *nullis bonis placet* was as true as the thing was reaſonable it ſhould be ſo. Witneſs thoſe known teſtimonies of (a) *Tertullian*, (b) *Cyprian*, (c) *Lactantius*, (d) *Hierom*, (e) *Serenus Sulpitius*, (f) *Minutius*, (g) *Hilary*, (h) *Damascent*, (i) *Chryſoſtom*, (k) *Theophylaſt*, and (l) *Bernard*, and divers others, whom the reader may find quoted by the Archbiſhop of *Malato*, Lib. 8. de rep. Eccleſ. cap. 8.

Socrat. l. 1. c. 26. cont.
Creſcon. Grammat. lib. 3. c. 50. vide etiam *Epist.* 61. ad *Dulcilium*. Et *Epist.* 158. & 159. & lib. 1. c. 29. cont. *Petilian*. vide etiam *Socrat.* li. 3. c. 3. & c. 29. Lib. 2. cap. 5. retractat. vide *Epist.* 48. ad *Vincent.* script. poſt retract. & *Epist.* 50. ad *Bonifac.*

(a) ad *Scapulam*.
(b) Lib. 3. *Epist.* 1.
(c) Lib. 5. c. 20.
(d) In cap. 13. *Math.* & in cap. 2. *Hof.*
(e) In vit. *S. Martin*.
(f) *Octav.*
(g) Cont. *Auxent. Arr.*
(h) 3. *Seſt.* C. 32.
(i) In cap. 13. *Math.* hom: 47.
(k) In *Evang.* in *arth.*
(l) In verba *Apoſt.* fides ex auditu.

Numb. 10. Againſt this concurrent testimony my reading can furnish me with no adversary, nor contrary instances, but in *Atticus* of *C. P. Theodosius* of *Synada*, in *Statius* and *Ursens* before reckoned. Only indeed some of the later Popes of *Rome* began to be busie and unmerciful, but it was then when themselves were secure, and their interests great, and their temporal concerns highly considerable.

Numb. 11. For it is most true, and not amiss to observe it, that no man who was under the ferula did ever think it lawful to have opinions forced, or Hereticks put to death, and yet many men who themselves have escaped the danger of a pile and a faggot, have changed their opinion just as the case was altered, that is, as themselves were unconcern'd in the suffering. *Petilian*, *Parmenian*, and *Gaudentius*, by no means would allow it lawful, for themselves were in danger, and were upon that side that is ill thought of and discountenanc'd: but * *Gregory* and † *Leo*, Popes of *Rome*, upon whose side the authority and advantages were, thought it lawful they should be punish'd and persecuted, for themselves were unconcerned in the danger of suffering. And therefore *St. Gregory* commends the Exarch of *Ravenna*, for forcing them who dissented from those men who called themselves the Church. And there were some Divines in the Lower *Germany*, who upon great reasons spake against the tyranny of the Inquisition, and restraining Propheſying, who yet when they had shaked off the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their Brethren. It was unjust in them, in all men unreasonable and uncharitable, and often increases the error, but never lessens the danger.

Numb. 12. But yet although the Church, I mean, in her distinct and Clerical capacity, was against destroying

Apud. Aug.
lib. 1. c. 7.
cont. Epist.
Parmenian.
& l. 2. c. 10.
cont. tit. Petilian.

* *Epist. 1. ad Turbicum.*

† *Lib. 1. ep. 72.*

oying or punishing difference in opinion, till
 Popes of Rome did super-seminate and per-
 de the contrary, yet the Bishops did persuade
 Emperours to make Laws against Hereticks,
 to punish disobedient persons with fines,
 imprisonment, with death and banishment
 respectively. This indeed calls us to a new ac-
 count. For the Church-men might not pro-
 ceed to blood nor corporal inflictions, but
 might they not deliver over to the Secular arm,
 to persuade temporal Princes to do it? For
 I am to say, that since it is notorious that
 doctrine of the Clergy was against punishing
 hereticks, the Laws which were made by the
 Emperours against them might be for restraint
 of differing Religion in order to the preservati-
 on of the publick peace, which is too frequently
 troubled by the division of opinions. But I am
 uncertain whether that was always the reason,
 whether or no some Bishops of the Court did
 also serve their own ends in giving their
 counsels such untoward counsel; but we find the
 Laws made severally to several purposes, in di-
 vers cases and with different severity. *Constan-*
the Emperour made a Sanction, Ut parem
fidelibus ii qui errant pacis & quietis fruitio-
gaudentes accipiant. The Emperour *Gratian*
reed, Ut quam quisq; vellet religionem sequere-
& conventus Ecclesiasticos semoto metu omnes
rent. But he excepted the Manichees, the
Minians, and Eunomians. Theodosius the el-
 der made a Law of death against the Anabap-
 tists of his time, and banish'd *Eunomius*, and
 against other erring persons appointed a pe-
 niary mulct; but he did no executions so
 severe as his sanctions, to shew they were
 made in terror only. So were the Laws of
Valentinian

*Apud Euseb.
 de vita Con-
 stant.*

*Vide Socrat.
 l. 7. c. 12.*

Wid. Cod. de ha-
reticis. L. 1. 1. 1.
niches. & leg.
Arriani, & l.
Quicumque.

• Apud Pan-
lun. Diac. l.
16. & l. 24.

Numb. 13.

Valentinian and Martian, decreeing *contra omnes qui prava docere tenent*, that they should be put to death; so did * *Michael* the Emperour, but *Justinian* only decreed banishment.

But what ever whispers some Politicks might make to their Princes, as the wisest and holiest did not think it lawful for Church-men alone to do executions, so neither did they transmit such persons to the Secular Judicature. And therefore when the Edict of *Macedonius* the President was so ambiguous, that it seemed to threaten death to Hereticks, unless they recanted; St. *Austin* admonished him carefully to provide that no Heretick should be put to death, alledging it also not only to be unchristian, but illegal also, and not warranted by imperial constitutions; for before his time no Laws were made for their being put to death: but however he prevailed, that *Macedonius* published another Edict, more explicate, and less seemingly severe. But in his Epistle to *Donatus*, the African Proconsul, he is more confident and determinate, *Necessitate nobis impacta & indicta, ut potius occidi ab eis eligamus, quam eos occidendos vestris judiciis ingeramus.*

Numb. 14.

But afterwards many got a trick of giving them over to the Secular power, which at the best is no better than hypocrisy, removing envy from themselves, and laying it upon others, and refusing to do that in external act, which they do in Council and approbation: which is a transferring the act to another, and retaining a proportion of guilt unto themselves, even their own and the others too. I end this with the saying of *Chrysostom*, *Dogmata impia & que ab hereticis profecta sunt arguere & anathematizare oportet, hominibus autem parcendum & pro salutorum orandum.*

Serm. de Ana-
themate.

S E C T. XV.

*How far the Church or Governors may act to
the restraining false or differing opinions.*

BUT although Heretical persons are not to be *Numb. 1.*
destroyed, yet Heresy being a work of the
evil, and all Hereticks criminal persons, whose
teachings and doctrine have influence upon Communi-
ties of men whether Ecclesiastical or civil, the
Governours of the Republick, or Church respec-
tively are to do their duties in restraining those
evils which may happen to their several
charges, for whose indemnity they are answer-
able. And therefore according to the effect or
consequence of the doctrine or the person, so the cog-
nizance of them belongs to several judicatures.
If it be false doctrine in any capacity and doth
bring mischief in any sense, or teaches ill life in any
instance, or encourages evil in any particular,
no-
ὁμολογῶντες, these men must be silenced, they
must be convinced by sound doctrine, and put
in silence by spiritual evidence and restrained
by authority Ecclesiastical, that is, by spiritual
measures according as it seems necessary to him
who is most concern'd in the regiment of the
Church. For all this we have precept and prece-
dent Apostolical, and much reason. For by thus
proceeding, the governour of the Church uses all that
authority that is competent, and all the means
that is reasonable, and that proceeding which is
regular, that he may discharge his cure and secure
his flock. And that he possibly may be deceived in
judging a doctrine to be heretical, and by conse-
quence the person excommunicate suffers injury,

is

is no argument againſt the reaſonableneſs of the proceeding. For all the injury that is, is viſible and in appearance, and ſo is his crime. Judges muſt judge according to their beſt reaſon guided by the Law of God as their rule, and by evidence and appearance as their beſt inſtrument, and they can judge no better. If the Judges be good and prudent, the error of proceeding will not be great, nor ordinary, and there can be no better eſtabliſhment of humane judicature, than is a fallible proceeding upon an infallible ground; And if the judgment of Hereſy be made by eſtimate and proportion of the opinion to a good or a bad life reſpectively, ſuppoſing an error in the deduction, there will be no malice in the concluſion; and that he endeavours to ſecure piety according to the beſt of his underſtanding, and yet did miſtake in his proceeding, is only an argument that he did his duty after the manner of men, poſſibly with the Piety of a Saint, though not with the underſtanding of an Angel. And the little inconvenience that happens to the perſon injuriouſly judged is abundantly made up in the excellency of the Diſcipline, the goodneſs of the example, the care of the publick, and all thoſe great influences into the manners of men which derive from ſuch an act ſo publickly conſign'd. But ſuch publick judgment in matters of opinion muſt be ſeldom and curious, and never but to ſecure piety, and a holy life: for in matters ſpeculative as all determinations are fallible, ſo ſcarce any of them are to purpoſe, nor ever able to make compensation of either ſide, either for the publick fraction, or the particular injuſtice if it ſhould ſo happen in the cenſure.

But then as the Church may proceed thus far, *Numb. 2.*

yet no Chriſtian man, or Community of men may proceed farther. For if they be deceived in their judgment and cenſure, and yet have paſſed only ſpiritual cenſures, they are totally ineffectual, and come to nothing, there is no effect remaining upon the Soul, and ſuch cenſures are not to meddle with the Body ſo much as indirectly. But if any other judgment paſs upon perſons erring, ſuch judgments whoſe effects remain, if the perſon be unjuſtly cenſured, nothing will answer and make compensation for ſuch injuries. If a perſon be excommunicate unjuſtly, it will do him no hurt, but if he be killed or diſmembred unjuſtly, that cenſure and affliction is not made ineffectual by his innocence, he is certainly kill'd and diſmembred. So that as the Churches authority in ſuch caſes is reſtrained and made prudent, cautelous, and orderly, is juſt and competent: ſo the proceeding is reaſonable, it is provident for the publick and the inconveniences that may fall upon particulars ſo little, as that the publick benefit makes ample compensation, ſo long as the proceeding is but ſpiritual.

This diſcourſe is in the caſe of ſuch opinions, *Numb. 3.* which by the former rules are formal heresies, and upon practical inconveniences. But for matters of queſtion which have not in them any injury to the publick tranquillity, as the Republick hath nothing to do, upon the ground of all the former diſcourſes; ſo if the Church meddles with them where they do not derive into ill, either in the perſon or in the conſequent, theſe are deſtructions of the foundation of Religion, which is all one, for that thoſe fundamental articles are of greateſt neceſſity in order

to

But

to a vertuous and godly life, which is wholly built upon them, (and therefore are principally neceſſary.) If ſhe meddles further, otherwiſe than by preaching, and conferring, and exhortation, ſhe becomes tyrannical in her government, makes her ſelf an immediate judge of conſciences and perſuaſions, lords it over their faith, deſtroys unity, and charity; and as if he that dogmatizes the opinion becomes criminal, if he troubles the Church with an immodest, peeviſh, and pertinacious propoſal of his article, not ſimply neceſſary; ſo the Church does not do her duty, if ſhe ſo condemns it *pro tribunali* as to enjoyn him and all her ſubjects to believe the contrary. And as there may be pertinacy in doctrine, ſo there may be pertinacy in judging, and both are faults. The peace of the Church and the unity of her doctrine is beſt conſerved when it is judged by the proportion it hath to that rule of unity which the Apoſtles gave, that is the Creed for Articles of meer belief, and the precepts of Jeſus Chriſt, and the practical rules of piety, which are moſt plain and eaſy and without controverſy, ſet down in the Goſpels, and Writings of the Apoſtles. But to multiply articles, and adopt them into the family of the faith, and to require aſſent to ſuch articles which (as *St. Paul's* phraſe is) are of doubtful diſputation, equal to that aſſent we give to matters of faith, is to build a Tower upon the top of a Bulruſh, and the further the effect of ſuch proceedings does extend, the worſe they are; the very making ſuch a Law is unreaſonable, the inflicting ſpiritual cenſure upon them that cannot do ſo much violence to their underſtanding as to obey it, is unjuſt and ineffectual; but to puniſh the perſon with death

or with corporal infliction, indeed it is effectual, but it is therefore tyrannical. We have seen what the Church may do towards restraining false or differing opinions, next I shall consider by way of Corollary what the Prince may do as for his interest, and only in securing his People, and serving the ends of true Religion.

S E C T. XVI.

Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to several Religions.

FOR upon these very grounds we may easily give account of that great question, Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give toleration to several Religions. Numb. 1.

For first, it is a great fault that men will call the several Sects of Christians by the names of several Religions. The Religion of JESUS CHRIST is the form of sound doctrine and wholesome words, which is set down in Scripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plain places, and separated as for the question necessary or not necessary by the symbol of the Apostles. Those impertinencies which the antonness and vanity of men hath commenced, which their interests have promoted, which give not truth so much as their own ends, are far from being distinct Religions; for matters of opinion are no parts of the worship of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his Commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are in that proportion as they contribute parts and actions, and minute particulars

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culars of that Religion to whoſe end they do, or pretend to ſerve. And ſuch are all the Sects and all the pretences of Chriſtians, but pieces and minutes of Chriſtianity, if they do ſerve the great end, as every man for his own Sect and Intereſt believes for his ſhare it does.

Numb. 2.

2. Toleration hath a double ſenſe or purpoſe, for ſometimes by it Men underſtand a publick licence and exerciſe of a Sect: Sometimes it is only an indemnity of the perſons privately to convene and to opine as they ſee cauſe, and as they mean to answer to God. Both theſe are very much to the ſame purpoſe, unleſs ſome perſons whom we are bound to ſatiſfie be ſcandaliz'd, and then the Prince is bound to do as he is bound to ſatiſfie. To God it is all one. For abſtracting from the offence of perſons, which is to be conſidered juſt as our obligation is to content the perſons, it is all one whether we indulge to them to meet publickly or privately, to do actions of Religion concerning which we are not perſuaded that they are truly holy. To God it is juſt one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the ſame, only the circumſtance of publick and private is different, which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concern any thing but the matter of Scandal and relation to the minds and fantasies of certain perſons.

Numb. 3.

3. So that to tolerate is not to perſecute. And the queſtion whether the Prince may tolerate divers perſuaſions, is no more than whether he may lawfully perſecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this caſe he is juſt ſo to tolerate diverſity of perſuaſions as he is to tolerate publick actions, for no opinion is judicable, nor no perſon puniſhable, but for a ſin, and if his opinion by reaſon of its managing, or its effect

be a sin in it self, or becomes a sin to the person, then as he is to do towards other sins, so to that opinion or man so opining. But to believe so, or not so, when there is no more but meer believing, is not in his power to enjoin, therefore not to punish. And it is not only lawful to tolerate disagreeing persuasions, but the authority of God only is competent to take notice of it, and infallible to determine it, and fit to judge, and therefore no humane authority is sufficient to do all those things which can justify the inflicting temporal punishments upon such as do not conform in their persuasions to a rule or authority which is not only fallible, but supposed by the disagreeing person to be actually deceived.

But I consider that in the toleration of a different opinion, Religion is not properly and immediately concerned, so as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be safe in diversity of persuasions, and its also a part of Christian * Religion that the liberty of Mens Consciences should be preserved in all things, where God hath not set a limit and made a restraint; that the Soul of man should be free, and acknowledge no master but Jesus Christ; that matters spiritual should not be restrain'd by punishments corporal; that the same meekness and charity should be preferred in the promotion of Christianity, that gave foundation and increment, and firmness in its publication; that conclusions should not be more dogmatical than the vertual resolution and efficacy of the premises: And that the persons should not more certainly be condemned than their opinions confuted; and lastly, that the inimitabilities of Men and difficulties of things should both put in balance to make abatement in definitive sentence against mens persons. But

Numb. 4.

• *Humani juris & naturalis potestatis, unicuique, quod putaverit, colere. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, qua suscipi sponte debet, non vi.*
Tertul. ad Scapulam.

then becauſe toleration of opinions is not properly a queſtion of Religion, it may be a queſtion of policy: And although a man may be a good Chriſtian though he believe an error not fundamental, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally diſturb the publick peace through the over-activenes of the perſon, and the confidence of their belief and the opinion of its appendant neceſſity, and therefore toleration of differing perſuaſions in theſe caſes is to be conſidered upon political grounds, and is juſt ſo to be admitted or denied as the opinions or toleration of them may conſiſt with the publick and neceſſary ends of Government. Only this: As Chriſtian Princes muſt look to the intereſt of their Government, ſo eſpecially muſt they conſider the intereſts of Chriſtianity, and not call every redargution or modeſt diſcovery of an eſtabliſhed error, by the name of diſturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that the peeviſhneſs and impatience of contradiction in the Governours may break the peace. Let them remember but the gentleneſs of Chriſtianity, the Liberty of Conſciences which ought to be preſerved, and let them do juſtice to the perſons who ever they are that are peeviſh, provided no mans perſon be over-born with prejudice. For ſure if it be neceſſary for all men to ſubſcribe to the preſent eſtabliſh'd Religion, by the ſame reaſon at another time a man may be bound to ſubſcribe to the contradictory, and ſo to all Religions in the World. And they only, who by their too much confidence in title God to all their fancies, and make them to be queſtions of Religion, and evidences for Heaven, or conſignations to Hell, they only think this doctrine unreaſonable, and they are the men that firſt diſturb the Church and peace.

peace, and then think there is no appeaſing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that conſider things wiſely, underſtand that ſince ſalvation and damnation depend not upon imper- tinencies, and yet that publick peace and tran- quility may, the Prince is in this caſe to ſeek how to ſecure Government, and the iſſues and inten- tions of that, while there is in theſe Caſes directly no inſecurity to Religion, unleſs by the acciden- tal uncharitableneſs of them that diſpute: Which uncharitableneſs is alſo much prevented when the publick peace is ſecured, and no perſon is on either ſide engag'd upon * revenge, or trou- bled with diſgrace, or vexed with puniſhments by any decretory ſentence againſt him. It was the ſaying of a wiſe States-man (I mean *Thuanus*) *Heretici qui pace data factionibus ſcinduntur, per- ſentione uniuntur contra Remp.* If you perſecute Hereticks or Diſcrepant, they unite themſelves to a common defence: If you permit them, they divide themſelves upon private intereſt, and the rather, if this intereſt was an ingredient of the opinion.

The Sum is this, it concerns the duty of a Prince becauſe it concerns the honour of God, and that all vices and every part of ill life be diſcoun- tenanced and reſtrained; And therefore in rela- tion to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For reaſon the underſtanding being to direct the will, and ſcribe opinions to guide our practices, they are conſi- derable only as they teach impiety and vice, as far as they either diſhonour God or diſobey him. Now ſuch doctrines are to be condemned; but for the perſons preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they either juſtifie nor approve the pretended Con- ſequences which are certainly impious, they are to be ſeparated from that conſideration. But if

* *Dextera præ-
cipue capit in-
dulgentia
mentes,
Aſperitas o-
cium ſavaque
bella parit.*

Numb. 5.

they know ſuch conſequences and allow them, or if they do not ſtay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take ſin before hand, and manage them impiouſly in any ſenſe; or if either themſelves or their doctrine do really and without colour or fained pretext, diſturb the publick peace

* *Extas prudens monitum Mecanatis apud Dionem Caſſium ad Auguſtum in hac verba. Eos vero qui in Divinis aliquod innovant, odio habe & coerce, non Deorum ſolum cauſa: ſed quia nova numina hi tales introducen-*

tes multos impellunt ad mutationem rerum. Unde conjurationes, ſeditiones, conciliabula eſt, quod religionem committitur, in omnium fertur injuriam.

* and juſt intereſts, they are not to be ſuffered. In all other caſes it is not only lawful to permit them, but it is alſo neceſſary, that Princes and all in authority ſhould not perſecute diſcrepant opinions. And in ſuch caſes wherein perſons not otherwiſe incompetent are bound to reprove an error, (as they are in many) in all theſe if the Prince makes reſtraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the Laws of JESUS CHRIST.

S E C T. XVII.

Of compliance with diſagreeing Perſons or weak Conſciences in general.

Numb. 1.

UPON theſe grounds it remains that we reduce this doctrine to practical Concluſion and conſider among the differing ſects and opinions which trouble theſe parts of Chriſtendom and come into our concernment, which Sects Chriſtians are to be tolerated, and how far? and which are to be reſtrain'd and puniſh'd in the ſeveral proportions?

Numb. 2.

The firſt conſideration is, that ſince divers of opinions does more concern publick peace than religion, what is to be done to perſons who

disobey a publick ſanction upon a true allegation; that they cannot believe it to be lawful to obey ſuch conſtitutions, although they diſbelieve them upon inſufficient grounds, that is, whether in *conſtituta lege* diſagreeing perſons or weak conſciences are to be complied withall, and their diſobeying and diſagreeing tolerated?

1. In this queſtion there is no diſtinction can be made between perſons truly weak, and but pretending ſo. For all that pretend to it, are to be allowed the ſame liberty whatſoever it be; nor mans ſpirit is known to any, but to God and himſelf: and therefore pretences and reaſons in this caſe, are both alike in order to the publick toleration. And this very thing is one argument to perſuade a Negative. For the chief thing in this caſe is the concernment of publick government, which is then moſt of all violated, when what may prudently be permitted to ſome purpoſes, may be demanded to many more, and the piety of the Laws abuſed to the impiety of other mens ends. And if Laws be made ſo malleable, as to comply with weak conſciences, he that hath a mind to diſobey, is made impregnable againſt the coercitive power of the Law by this pretence. For a weak conſcience ſignifies nothing in this caſe, but a diſlike of the Law upon a contrary perſuaſion. For if ſome weak conſciences do obey the Law, and others do not, tis not their weakneſs indefinitely that is the cauſe of it, but a definite and particular perſuaſion to the contrary. So that if ſuch a pretence be an excuſe ſufficient from obeying, then the law ſanction obliging every one to obey that hath a mind to it, and he that hath not, may chooſe, that is, it is no Law at all, for he that hath a mind to it may do it if there be no Law,

Numb. 3.

and he that hath no mind to it need not for all the Law.

Numb. 4.

And therefore the wit of man cannot prudently frame a law of that temper, and expedient, but either he muſt loſe the formality of a Law, and neither have power coercitive nor obligatory, but *ad arbitrium inferiorum*, or elſe it cannot antecedently to the particular caſe give leave to any ſort of men to diſagree or diſobey.

Numb. 5.

2. Suppoſe that a Law be made with great reaſon ſo as to ſatiſſie divers perſons pious and prudent, that it complies with the neceſſity of government, and promotes the intereſt of Gods ſervice and publick order, it may eaſily be imagined that theſe perſons which are obedient ſons of the Church, may be as zealous for the publick order and diſcipline of the Church, as others for their opinion againſt it, and may be as much ſcandalized if diſobedience be tolerated, as others are if the Law be exacted, and what ſhall be done in this caſe? Both ſorts of men cannot be complied withall, becauſe as theſe pretend to be offended at the Law, and by conſequence (if they underſtand the conſequents of their own opinion) at them that obey the Law: ſo the others are juſtly offended at them that unjuſtly diſobey it. If therefore there be any on the right ſide as confident and zealous as they who are on the wrong ſide, then the diſagreeing perſons are not to be complied with, to avoid giving offence; for if they be, offence is given to better perſons, and ſo the miſchief, which ſuch complying ſeeks to prevent, is made greater and more unjuſt, obedience is diſcouraged, and diſobedience is legally canonized for the reſult of a holy and a tender conſcience.

3. Such complying with the diſagreeings of a *Numb. 6.*
 ſort of men, is the total overthrow of all Diſci-
 pline, and it is better to make no Laws of publick
 worſhip, than to reſcind them in the very con-
 ſtitution: and there can be no end in making the
 ſanction, but to make the Law ridiculous, and
 the authority contemptible. For to ſay that com-
 plying with weak conſciences in the very framing
 of a Law of Diſcipline, is the way to preſerve u-
 nity, were all one as to ſay, To take away all
 laws is the beſt way to prevent diſobedience.
 In ſuch matters of indifferency, the beſt way of ce-
 menting the fraction, is to unite the parts in the
 authority, for then the queſtion is but one, *viz.*
 Whether the authority muſt be obeyed or not?
 But if a permiſſion be given of diſputing the par-
 ticulars, the queſtions become next to infinite.
 A Mirrour when it is broken represents the ob-
 ject multiplyed and divided: but if it be entire
 and through one center tranſmits the ſpecies to
 the eye, the Viſion is one and natural. Laws are
 the Mirror in which men are to dreſs and com-
 poſe their actions, and therefore muſt not be
 broken with ſuch clauses of exception which may
 without remedy be abuſed to the prejudice of
 authority, and peace, and all humane ſanctions.
 And I have known in ſome Churches that this
 pretence hath been nothing but a deſign to diſ-
 credit the Law, to diſmantle the authority that
 made it, to raiſe their own credit, and a trophy
 of their zeal, to make it a characteriſtick note
 of a Sect, and the cogniſance of holy perſons,
 and yet the men that claim'd exemption from
 the Laws, upon pretence of having weak Con-
 ſciences, if in hearty expreſſion you had told
 them ſo to their heads, they would have ſpit
 in your face, and were ſo far from confeſſing
 them-

themselves weak, that they thought themselves able to give Laws to Christendom, to instruct the greatest Clerks, and to Catechize the Church her self; And which is the worst of all, they who were perpetually clamorous that the severity of the Laws should slacken as to their particular, and in matter adiaphorous (in which, if the Church hath any authority, she hath power to make Laws) to indulge a leave to them to do as they list, yet were the most imperious amongst men, most decretory in their sentences, and most impatient of any disagreeing from them, though in the least minute and particular: whereas by all the justice of the world, they who persuade such a compliance in matters of fact, and of so little question, should not deny to tolerate persons that differ in questions of great difficulty and contestation.

Numb. 7.

4. But yet since all things almost in the world have been made matters of dispute, and the will of some Men, and the malice of others, and the infinite industry and pertinacy of contesting and resolution to conquer hath abused some persons innocently into a persuasion, that even the Laws themselves, though never so prudently constituted, are superstitious or impious, such persons who are otherwise pious, humble and religious, are not to be destroyed for such matters, which in themselves are not of concernment to salvation, and neither are so accidentally to such men and in such cases where they are innocently abused, and they err without purpose and design. And therefore if there be a publick disposition in some persons to dislike Laws of a certain quality, if it be fore-seen it is to be considered *in lege dicendâ*; and whatever inconvenience or particular offence is fore-seen

is either to be directly avoided in the Law, or elſe a compenſation in the excellency of the Law, and certain advantages, made to out-weigh their pretenſions: But *in lege jam diſpenſa*, becauſe there may be a neceſſity ſome perſons ſhould have a liberty indulged them, it is neceſſary that the Governours of the Church ſhould be intruſted with a power to conſider the particular caſe, and indulge a liberty to the perſon, and grant perſonal diſpenſations. This I ſay is to be done at ſeveral times, upon particular inſtance, upon ſingular conſideration, and new emergencies. But that a whole kind of men, ſuch a kind to which all men without poſſibility of being confuted may pretend, ſhould at once in the very frame of the Law be permitted to diſobey, is to nullifie the Law, to deſtroy Diſcipline, and to hallow diſobedience; it takes away the obliging part of the Law, and makes that the thing enacted ſhall not be enjoyn'd, but tolerated only: it deſtroys unity and uniformity, which to preſerve was the very end of ſuch laws of Diſcipline: it bends the rule to the thing which is to be ruled, ſo that the Law obeys the ſubject, not the ſubject the Law: it is to make a law for particulars, not upon general reaſon and congruity, againſt the prudence and deſign of all Laws in the World, and abſolutely without the example of any Church in Chriſtendom; it prevents no ſcandal, for ſome will be ſcandalized at the authority it ſelf, ſome at the complying, and remiſſneſs of Diſcipline, and ſeveral men at matters, and upon ends contradictory: All which cannot, ſome ought not to be complied with-all.

Numb. 8.

6. The ſum is this. The end of the Laws of Discipline are in an immediate order to the conſervation and ornament of the publick, and therefore the Laws muſt not ſo tolerate, as by conſerving perſons to deſtroy themſelves and the publick benefit, but if there be cauſe for it, they muſt be caſtled, or if there be no ſufficient cauſe, the complyings muſt be ſo as may beſt preſerve the particulars in conjunction with the publick end, which becauſe it is primarily intended, is of greateſt conſideration. But the particulars whether of caſe or perſon are to be conſidered occaſionally and emergently by the Judges, but cannot antecedently and regularly be determined by a Law.

Numb. 9.

But this ſort of Men is of ſo general pretence, that all Laws and all Judges may eaſily be abuſed by them. Thoſe Sects which are ſignified by a Name, which have a ſyſtem of Articles, a body of profeſſion, may be more clearly determined in their queſtion concerning the lawfulness of permitting their profeſſions and aſſemblies.

I ſhall inſtance in two, which are moſt troubleſome and moſt diſlik'd; and by an account made of theſe, we may make judgment what may be done towards others whoſe errors are not apprehended of ſo great malignity. The Men I mean are the Anabaptiſts and the Pa-piſts.

SECT

S E C T. XVIII.

A particular conſideration of the opinions of the Anabaptiſts.

IN the Anabaptiſts I conſider only their two *Numb. 1.* capital opinions, the one againſt the baptiſm of Infants, the other againſt Magiſtracy: And becauſe they produce different judgments and various effects, all their other fancies which vary as the Moon does, may ſtand or fall in their proportion and likenes to theſe.

And firſt I conſider their denying baptiſm to *Numb. 2.* infants; although it be a doctrine juſtly condemned by the moſt ſorts of Chriſtians, upon great grounds of reaſon, yet poſſibly their defence may be ſo great, as to take off much, and abate the edge of their adverſaries aſſault. It will be neither unpleaſant nor unprofitable to draw a ſhort ſcheme of plea for each party, the reſult of which poſſibly may be, that though they be deceived, yet they have ſo great excuſe on their ſide, that their error is not impudent or inconceivable. The baptiſm of Infants reſts wholly upon this diſcourſe.

When God made a covenant with Abraham *Numb. 3.* for himſelf and his poſterity, into which the Gentiles were reckoned by ſpiritual adoption, he did for the preſent conſign that covenant with the Sacrament of Circumciſion. The extent of which rite, was to all his Family, from the *Ma-*
in domo, to the *Proſelytus domicilio*, and to infants eight days old. Now the very nature of this covenant being a covenant of Faith for its formality, and with all faithful people for the object; and circumciſion being a ſeal of this covenant,

nant, if ever any rite do ſupervene to conſign the ſame covenant, that rite muſt acknowledge circumciſion for its type and precedent. And this the Apoſtle tells us in expreſs doctrine. Now the nature of types, is to give ſome proportions to its ſucceſſor the Antitype, and they both being ſeals of the ſame righteouſneſs of Faith, it will not eaſily be found where theſe two ſeals have any ſuch diſtinction in their nature or purpoſes, as to appertain to perſons of differing capacity, and not equally concern all, and this argument was thought of ſo much force by ſome of thoſe excellent men which were Biſhops in the primitive Church, that a good Biſhop writ an Epiſtle to St. Cyprian, to know of him whether or no it were lawful to baptize Infants before the eighth day, becauſe the type of baptiſm was miniſtered in that circumciſion, he in his diſcourſe ſuppoſing that the firſt rite was a direction to the ſecond, which prevailed with him ſo far as to believe it to limit every circumſtance.

Numb. 4. And not only this type, but the acts of Chriſt which were previous to the institution of Baptiſm did prepare our underſtanding by ſuch impreſſes as were ſufficient to produce ſuch perſuaſion in us, that Chriſt intended this miniſtery for the actual advantage of Infants as well as of perſons of underſtanding. For Chriſt commanded that Children ſhould be brought unto him, he took them in his arms, he impoſed hands on them and bleſſed them, and without queſtion did by ſuch acts of favour conſign his love to them, and them to a capacity of an eternal participation of it. And poſſibly the invitation which Chriſt made to all to come to him, all them that are heavy laden, did in its proportion concern Infants as much as others, if they be guilty of Original ſin, and

and if that ſin be a burthen, and preſſes them to any ſpiritual danger or inconvenience. And it is all the reaſon of the World, that ſince the grace of Chriſt is as large as the prevarication of Adam, all they who are made guilty by the firſt Adam, ſhould be cleansed by the ſecond. But as they are guilty by another mans act, ſo they ſhould be brought to the Font, to be purified by others, there being the ſame proportion of reaſon, that by others acts, they ſhould be relieved who were in danger of perishing by the act of others. And therefore St. Auſtin argues excellently to this pur-

poſe. *Accommodat illis mater Eccleſia aliorum pe-* Serm. 10. de
ccatoribus, ut veniant; aliorum cor, ut credant; aliorum verb. Apoſt.
linguam, ut fateantur: ut quoniam quod agri ſunt,
alio peccante pręgravantur, ſic cum ſani fiant alio
conſistente ſalventur. And Juſtin Martyr, ἀξίωνται Reſp. ad Or-
τὸν διὰ τῆς βαπτίſμας ἀγαθὸν τὰ βέβαιον τῇ μετὰ τὸν thodoxos.
ἐκπεριζόοντων αὐτὰ τῷ βαπτίſματι.

But whether they have original ſin or no, yet Numb. 5.
take them *in puris naturalibus*, they cannot go to God, or attain to eternity; to which they were intended in their firſt being and creation, and therefore much leſs ſince their naturals are impair'd by the curſe on humane nature procur'd by Adam's prevarication. And if a natural Adam cannot *in puris naturalibus* attain to Heaven, which is a ſupernatural end, much leſs when it is loaden with accidental and greivous impediments. Now then ſince the only way revealed to us of acquiring Heaven is by Jeſus Chriſt; and the firſt inlet into Chriſtianity, and acceſs to Heaven is by Baptiſm, as appears by the perpetual analogy of the New Teſtament, either Infants or not perſons capable of that end which is the perfection of humane nature, and to which the Soul of Man in its being made immortal was eſſen-

ſentially deſign'd, and ſo are miſerable and deficient from the very end of humanity, if they die, before the uſe of reaſon; or elſe they muſt be brought to Chriſt by the Church doors, that is by the Font and Waters of Baptiſm.

Numb. 6.

And in reaſon, it ſeems more pregnant and plausible that Infants rather than men of underſtanding ſhould be baptized: For ſince the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon Divine Inſtitution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects independently upon man, in them that do not hinder their operation; ſince Infants cannot by any act of their own promote the hope of their own ſalvation, which men of reaſon and choice may, by acts of vertue and election; it is more agreeable to the goodneſs of God, the honour and excellency of the Sacrament, and the neceſſity of its inſtitution that it ſhould in Infants ſupply the want of humane acts and free obedience. Which the very thing it ſelf ſeems to ſay it does, becauſe its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man's part, but that its efficacy be not hindred: And then in Infants, the diſpoſition is equal, and the neceſſity more; they cannot *parere obicem*, and by the ſame reaſon cannot do others acts, which without the Sacraments do advantage us towards our hopes of heaven, and therefore have more need to be ſupplied by an act, and an Inſtitution Divine and ſupernatural.

Numb. 7.

And this is not only neceſſary in reſpect of the condition of Infants in capacity, to do acts of grace, but alſo in obedience to Divine precept. For Chriſt made a Law whoſe Sanction is with an excluſive negative to them that are not baptized, [*Unleſs a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven;*

If then Infants have a capacity of being co-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom of his Father, as Christ affirms they have, by saying [*for of such is the kingdom of heaven*] then there is a necessity that they should be brought to Baptism, there being an absolute exclusion of all persons unbaptized, and all persons not spiritual from the Kingdom of Heaven.

But indeed, it is a destruction of all the hopes and happiness of Infants, a denying to them an exemption from the final condition of Beasts and Infectiles, or else a designing of them to a worse misery, to say that God hath not appointed some external or internal means of bringing them to eternal happiness: Internal they have none; for Grace being an improvement and heightning the faculties of nature, in order to a heighten'd and supernatural end, Grace hath no influence or efficacy upon their faculties, who can do no natural acts of understanding: And if there be no external means, then they are destitute of all hopes, and possibilities of salvation.

But thanks be to God, he hath provided better and told us accordingly, for he hath made a promise of the holy Ghost to Infants as well as to men: *The Promise is made to you and to your children*, said St. Peter; *The Promise of the Father, the Promise that he would send the Holy Ghost*: Now if you ask how this Promise shall be convey'd to our children, we have an example out of the same Sermon of St. Peter, *Be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost*; So that therefore because the holy Ghost is promised, and Baptism is the means of receiving the Promise, therefore Baptism pertains to them, to whom the Promise which is the best of Baptism does appertain. And that we

may not think this Argument is fallible, or of humane collection, obſerve that it is the Argument of the ſame Apoſtle in expreſs terms: For in the caſe of *Cornelius* and his Family, he juſtified his proceeding by this very medium, *Shall we deny Baptiſm to them who have received the gift of the holy Ghoſt as well as we?* Which Diſcourſe if it be reduced to form of Argument ſays this;

- They that are capable of the ſame Grace are receptive of the ſame ſign; but then (to make the Syllogiſm up with an aſſumption proper to our preſent purpoſe) Infants are capable of the ſame Grace, that is of the holy Ghoſt (for the Promise is made to our Children as well as to us, and St. *Paul* ſays the Children of believing Parents are holy, and therefore have the holy Ghoſt who is the Fountain of holineſs and ſanctification) therefore they are to receive the ſign and the ſeal of it, that is, the Sacrament of Baptiſm.

Numb. 10. And indeed ſince God entred a Covenant with the Jews which did alſo actually involve their Children, and gave them a ſign to eſtabliſh the Covenant, and its appendant Promise, either God does not ſo much love the Church as he did the Synagogue, and the mercies of the Goſpel are more reſtrain'd, than the mercies of the Law, God having made a Covenant with the Infants of *Israel*, and none with the Children of Chriſtian Parents; or if he hath, yet we want the comfort of its Conſignation; and unleſs our Children are to be baptized, and ſo intitled to the Promiſes of the new Covenant, as the Jewiſh Babes were by Circumciſion, this mercy which appertains to Infants is ſo ſecret and undeclared and unconfigned, that we want much of that mercy and outward Teſtimony which gave them comfort and aſſurance.

And

And in proportion to theſe Precepts and Revelations was the practice Apoſtolic: For they to whom Chriſt gave in Precept to make Diſciples all Nations baptizing them, and knew that Nations without Children never were, and that therefore they were paſſively concerned in that commiſſion, baptizing whole Families, particularly that of *Stephanus* and divers others, in which it is more than probable there were ſome Minors, if not ſucking Babes. And this practice did deſcend upon the Church in ſubſequent Ages by Tradition Apoſtolic: Of this we have ſufficient Teſtimony from *Origen*, *Pro Eccleſia ab Apoſtolis traditionem accepit, etiam in ſeculis baptiſmum dare*: And *St. Auſtin*, *Hoc Eccleſia à majorum fide percepit*: And generally all Writers (as *Calvin* ſays) affirm the ſame thing: For *nullus eſt Scriptor tam vetuſtus, qui ejus originem ad Apoſtolorum ſeculum proferat*. From hence the Concluſion is, that Infants ought to be baptized, that it is ſimply neceſſary, that they who deny it are hereticks, and ſuch are not to be endured becauſe they deny to Infants hopes and take away the poſſibility of their ſalvation, which is revealed to us on no other condition of which they are capable but Baptiſm. For by the inſinuation of the Type, by the action of Chriſt, by the title of Infants have to Heaven, by the precept of the Goſpel, by the Energy of the Promiſe, by the reaſonableneſs of the thing, by the infinite neceſſity on the infants part, by the practice Apoſtolic, by their Tradition, and the univerſal practice of the Church; by all theſe God and good people proclaim the lawfulness, the convenience, and the neceſſity of Infants Baptiſm.

In Rom. 6.
tom. 2. pag.

543.

Serm. 10. de
verb. Apoſt.
c. 2.

4. Inſtit. cap.
16. §. 8.

Numb. 12. To all this, the *Anabaptiſt* gives a ſoft and gentle Answer, that it is a goodly harangue, which upon ſtrict examination will come to nothing, that it pretends fairly and ſignifies little: That ſome of theſe Allegations are falſe, ſome impertinent, and all the reſt inſufficient.

Numb. 13. For the Argument from Circumciſion is invalid upon infinite conſiderations; Figures and Types prove nothing, unleſs a Commandment go along with them, or ſome expreſs to ſignify ſuch to be their purpoſe: For the Deluge of Waters and the Ark of *Noah* were a figure of Baptiſm ſaid *Peter*; and if therefore the circumſtances of one ſhould be drawn to the other, we ſhould make Baptiſm a prodigy rather than a Rite: The Paſchal Lamb was a Type of the Eucharift which ſucceeds the other as Baptiſm does to Circumciſion; but becauſe there was in the manducation of the Paſchal Lamb, no preſcription of Sacramental drink, ſhall we thence conclude that the Eucharift is to be miniſtered but in one kind? And even in the very inſtance of this Argument, ſuppoſing a correſpondence of analogy between Circumciſion and Baptiſm, yet there is no correſpondence of identity: For though it were granted that both of them diſtinguiſh the Covenant of Faith, yet there is nothing in the circumſtance of childrens being circumciſed that ſo concerns that Myſtery, but that it might very well be given to Children and yet Baptiſm only to men of reaſon; becauſe Circumciſion left a Character in the fleſh, which being imprinted upon Infants did its work upon them when they came to age; and ſuch a Character was neceſſary becauſe there was no word added to the ſign; but Baptiſm imprints nothing that remains on the body, and if it leave

Character at all it is upon the ſoul, to which ſo the word is added which is as much a part of the Sacrament as the ſign it ſelf is; for both which reaſons, it is requiſite that the perſons baptized ſhould be capable of reaſon, that they may be capable both of the word of the Sacrament, and the impreſs made upon the Spirit: and ſince therefore the reaſon of this parity does wholly fail, there is nothing left to infer a neceſſity of complying in this circumſtance of age any more than in the other annexes of the Type: and the caſe is clear in the Biſhops Queſtion to Cumſaprian, for why ſhall not Infants be baptized ſt upon the eighth day as well as circumciſed? that the correſpondence of the Rites be an Argument to infer one circumſtance which is imperſon and accidental to the myſteriousneſs of the Rite, why ſhall it not infer all? And then preſo Females muſt not be baptized, becauſe they were not circumciſed: But it were more proper ſtred we would underſtand it right, to proſecute the analogy from the Type to the Anti-type by the way of letter and ſpirit, and ſignification, and tiſm. Circumciſion figures Baptiſm, ſo alſo the ad- ſorments of the Circumciſion ſhall ſignifie ſome- thing, ſpiritual, in the adherencies of Baptiſm: ſo and therefore as Infants were circumciſed, ſo being ſpiritual Infants ſhall be baptized, which is ſpiritual Circumciſion; for therefore Babes had the miniſtry of the Type, to ſignifie that we muſt when we give our names to Chriſt become children in malice. [*for unleſs you come like one of theſe little ones, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven*] ſaid our bleſſed Saviour, and then the Type is made compleat. and this ſeems to have been the ſenſe of the primitive Church; for in the Age next to the

L. 3. Epift. 8.
ad Fidum.

Apoſtles they gave to all baptized perſons milk and honey to repreſent to them their duty, that though in age and underſtanding they were men, yet they were Babes in Chriſt, and children in malice. But to infer the ſenſe of the Pædo-baptiſts is ſo weak a manner of arguing that *Anſtin* whoſe device it was (and men uſe to be in love with their own fancies) at the moſt pretended it but as probable and a meer conjecture.

Numb. 14. And as ill ſucceſs will they have with the other Arguments as with this; For from the action of Chriſts bleſſing Infants to infer that they are to be baptized, proves nothing ſo much as that there is great want of better Arguments; The Conclusion would be with more probability derived thus: Chriſt bleſſed children and ſo diſmiſſed them, but baptized them not, therefore Infants are not to be baptized: But let this be as weak as its enemy, yet that Chriſt did not baptize them, is an Argument ſufficient that Chriſt hath other ways of bringing them to Heaven than by Baptiſm, he paſſed his act of grace upon them by benediction and impoſition of hands.

Numb. 15. And therefore, although neither Infants nor any man in *puris naturalibus* can attain to a ſupernatural end without the addition of ſome inſtrument or means of Gods appointing ordinarily and regularly, yet where God hath not appointed a Rule nor an Order, as in the caſe of Infants and we contend he hath not, the Argument is invalid. And as we are ſure that God hath not commanded Infants to be baptized; ſo we are ſure God will do them no injuſtice, nor damn them for what they cannot help.

And therefore, let them be pressed with all *Numb. 16.*
 the inconveniences that are consequent to Original sin, yet either it will not be laid to the charge of Infants, so as to be sufficient to condemn them; or if it could, yet the mercy and absolute goodness of God will secure them, if he takes them away before they can glorifie him with a free obedience; *Quid ergo festinat innocens ad remissionem peccatorum*, was the Question of Tertullian, (*lib. de bapt.*) he knew no such danger from their Original guilt as to drive them to a laver of which in that Age of innocence they had no need, as he conceived. And therefore, there is no necessity of flying to the help of others, for tongue, and heart, and faith, and predispositions to baptism; for what need all this stir? as Infants without their own consent, without any act of their own, and without any exteriour solemnity contracted the guilt of Adam's sin, and so are lyable to all the punishment which can with justice descend upon his posterity who are personally innocent; so Infants shall be restored without any solemnity or act of their own, or of any other men for them, by the second Adam, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, by his righteousness and mercies applied either immediately, or how or when he shall be pleased to appoint. And so St. *Austin's* Argument will come to nothing without any need of Godfathers, or the faith of any body else. And it is too narrow a conception of God Almighty, because he hath tyed us to the observation of the Ceremonies of his own institution, that therefore he hath tyed himself to it. Many thousand ways there are by which God can bring any reasonable soul to himself: But nothing is more unreasonable, than because he hath tyed

all men of years and diſcretion to this way, therefore we of our own heads ſhall carry Infants to him that way without his direction: The conceit is poor and low, and the action conſequent to it is too bold and ventrous, *mysterium meum mihi & filiis domus mea*: Let him do what he pleaſe to Infants, we muſt not.

Numb. 17. Only this is certain, that God hath as great care of Infants as of others, and becauſe they have no capacity of doing ſuch acts as may be in order to acquiring ſalvation, God will by his own immediate mercy bring them thither where he hath intended them; but to ſay that therefore he will do it by an external act and miniſtery, and that confin'd to a particular, *viz.* This Rite and no other, is no good Argument, unleſs God could not do it without ſuch means, or that he had ſaid he would not: And why cannot God as well do his mercies to Infants now immediately, as he did before the inſtitution either of Circumciſion or Baptiſm?

Numb. 18. However, there is no danger that Infants ſhould periſh for want of this external Miniſtery, much leſs for prevaricating Chriſts precept of *Niſi quis renatus fuerit, &c.* For firſt, the Water and the Spirit in this place ſignifie the ſame thing; and by Water is meant the effect of the Spirit, cleaning and purifying the Soul, as appears in its parallel place of Chriſt baptizing with the Spirit and with Fire. For although this was literally fulfilled in Pentecoſt, yet morally there is more in it, for it is the ſign of the effect of the holy Ghoſt, and his productions upon the Soul; and it was an excellency of our bleſſed Saviour's office, that he baptizes all that come to him with the holy Ghoſt and with fire; for ſo St. *John* preferring Chriſts miſſion and

and office before his own, tells the Jews, not
 Chriſt's Diſciples, that Chriſt ſhall baptize them
 with Fire and the holy Spirit, that is, *all that*
come to him, as *John the Baptiſt* did with water,
 or ſo lies the Antithesis: And you may as well
 conclude that Infants muſt alſo paſs through
 the fire as through the water. And that we
 may not think this a trick to elude the preſſure
 of this place, *Peter* ſays the ſame thing; for
 when he had ſaid that Baptiſm ſaves us, he
 adds by way of explication [*not the waſhing of*
the fleſh, but the confidence of a good Conſcience
towards God] plainly ſaying that it is not water,
 or the purifying of the body, but the cleaning
 of the Spirit, that does that which is ſuppoſed
 to be the effect of Baptiſm; and if our Savi-
 our's exclusive negative be expounded by
 analogy to this of *Peter*, as certainly the other
 parallel inſtance muſt, and this may, then it
 will be ſo far from proving the neceſſity of In-
 fants Baptiſm, that it can conclude for no man
 that he is oblig'd to the Rite; and the doctrine
 of the Baptiſm is only to derive from the very
 words of Inſtitution, and not be forced from
 words which were ſpoken before it was Or-
 dain'd. But to let paſs this advantage, and to
 ſuppoſe it meant of external Baptiſm, yet this no
 more infers a neceſſity of Infant's Baptiſm, than
 the other words of Chriſt infer a neceſſity to
 give them the holy Communion, *Niſi comederitis*
carnem filii hominis, & biberitis ſanguinem, non in-
trabitis in regnum cœlorum; and yet we do not
 think theſe words ſufficient Argument to com-
 municate them; if men therefore will do us
 juſtice, either let them give both Sacraments to
 Infants, as ſome Ages of the Church did, or
 neither. For the wit of man is not able to ſhew
 a diſpa-

a disparity in the Sanction, or in the Energy of its expression. And therefore they were honest that understood the obligation to be parallel, and performed it accordingly, and yet because we say they were deceived in one instance, and yet the obligation (all the world cannot reasonably say but) is the same; they are as honest and as reasonable that do neither. And since the Ancient Church did with an equal opinion of necessity give them the Communion, and yet men now adays do not, why shall men be more burthened with a prejudice and a name of obloquy, for not giving the Infants one Sacrament more than they are disliked for not affording them the other. If *Anabaptist* shall be a name of disgrace, why shall not some other name be invented for them that deny to communicate Infants, which shall be equally disgraceful, or else both the opinions signified by such names, be accounted no disparagement, but receive their estimate according to their truth;

Numb. 19. Of which truth since we are now taking account from pretences of Scripture, it is considerable that the discourse of St. *Peter* which is pretended for the intitling Infants to the Promise of the holy Ghost, and by consequence to Baptism, which is supposed to be its instrument and conveyance, is wholly a fancy, and hath in it nothing of certainty or demonstration, and not much probability. For besides that the thing itself is unreasonable, and the holy Ghost works by the heightning and improving our natural faculties, and therefore is a promise that so concerns them as they are reasonable creatures, and may have a title to it, in proportion to their nature, but no possession or reception of it, till their faculties come into act; besides this, I say, if the

the words mentioned in *St. Peter's* Sermon (which are the only record of the promise) are interpreted upon a weak mistake: The promise belongs to you and to your children, therefore Infants are actually receptive of it in that capacity. That's the Argument; but the reason of it is not yet discovered, nor ever will, for [*to you and your children*] is to you and your posterity, to you and your children when they are of the same capacity, in which you are effectually receptive of the promise: But he that when ever the word [*children*] is used in Scripture shall by [*children*] understand Infants, must needs believe that in all *Israel* there were no men, but all were infants; and if that had been true, it had been the greater wonder they should overcome the *Anakims* and beat the King of *Moab*, and march so far, and discourse so well, for they were all called the children of *Israel*.

And for the Allegation of *St. Paul* that Infants are holy, if their Parents be faithful, it signifies nothing, but that they are holy by designation, just as *Jeremy* and *John Baptist* were sanctified in their Mothers womb, that is they were appointed and design'd for holy Ministeries; but had not received the Promise of the Father the gift of the holy Ghost, for all that sanctification; and just so the Children of Christian Parents are sanctified, that is design'd to the service of *Jesus Christ*, and the future participation of the Promises.

And as the Promise appertains not (for ought it appears) to Infants in that capacity and confidence, but only by the title of their being reasonable creatures, and when they come to that state of which by nature they have the faculty; if it did, yet Baptism is not the means of conveying

veying the holy Ghost. For that which *Peter* says, *be baptized and ye shall receive the holy Ghost*, signifies no more than this: First be baptized and then by imposition of the Apostles hands (which was another mystery and rite,) ye shall receive the Promise of the Father: And this is nothing but an Insinuation of the rite of confirmation, as is to this sense expounded by divers Ancient Authors, and in ordinary ministry the effect of it is not bestowed upon any unbaptized persons; for it is in order next after Baptism; and upon this ground *Peter's* Argument in the case of *Cornelius* was concluding enough *à majori ad minus*: Thus the holy Ghost was bestowed upon him and his Family, which gift by ordinary ministry was consequent to Baptism, (not as the effect is to the cause or to the proper instrument, but as a consequent is to an antecedent in a chain of causes accidentally and by positive institution depending upon each other) And God by that miracle did give testimony, that the persons of the men were in great dispositions towards Heaven, and therefore were to be admitted to those Rites, which are the ordinary inlets into the Kingdom of Heaven. But then from hence to argue that wherever there is a capacity of receiving the same grace, there also the same sign is to be ministred, and from hence to infer Pædo-baptism, is an Argument very fallacious upon several grounds. First, because Baptism is not the sign of the holy Ghost, but by another mystery it was conveyed ordinarily, and extraordinarily, it was conveyed independently from any mystery, and so the Argument goes upon a wrong supposition. Secondly, if the supposition were true, the proposition built upon it is false; for they that are capable of the

the ſame grace, are not always capable of the ſame ſign; for women under the Law of *Mofes*, although they were capable of the righteouſneſs of Faith, yet they were not capable of the ſign of Circumciſion: For God does not always convey his graces in the ſame manner, but to ſome mediately, to others immediately; and there is no better inſtance in the world of it, than the gift of the holy Ghoſt (which is the thing now inſtanc'd in this conteſtation) for it is certain in ſcripture, that it was ordinarily given by impoſition of hands, and that after Baptiſm; (And when this came into an ordinary miniſtery, it was called by the ancient Church Chriſm or Confirmation) but yet it was given ſometimes without impoſition of hands, as at Pentecoſt and to the Family of *Cornelius*; ſometimes before Baptiſm, ſometimes after, ſometimes in conjunction with it.

And after all this, leaſt theſe Arguments *Numb. 22.* ſhould not aſcertain their Cauſe, they fall on complaining againſt God, and will not be content with God, unleſs they may baptize their children, but take exceptions that God did more for the Children of the Jews. But why is ſo? Becauſe God made a Covenant with their children actually as Infants and conſign'd it by Circumciſion: Well; ſo he did with our children too in their proportion. He made a Covenant of ſpiritual Promiſes on his part, and ſpiritual and real ſervices on ours; and this pertains to Children when they are capable, but made with them as ſoon as they are alive, and yet not as with the Jews Babes; for as their rite conſign'd them actually, ſo it was a National and temporal bleſſing and Covenant, as a ſeparation of them from the portion of the Nations, a marking

marking them for a peculiar people, (and therefore while they were in the Wilderneſs and ſeparate from the commixture of all people, they were not at all circumciſed) but as that rite did ſeal the righteousneſs of Faith, ſo by vertue of its adherency, and remanency in their fleſh, it did that work when the Children came to age. But in Chriſtian Infants the caſe is otherwiſe; for the new Covenant being eſtabliſh'd upon better Promiſes, is not only to better purpoſes, but alſo in diſtinct manner to be underſtood; when their ſpirits are as receptive of a ſpiritual act or impreſs as the bodies of Jewiſh Children were of the ſign of Circumciſion, then it is to be conſign'd: But this buſineſs is quickly at an end, by ſaying that God hath done no leſs for ours, than for their Children; for he will do the mercies of a Father and Creator to them, and he did no more to the other; but he hath done more to ours; for he hath made a Covenant with them and built it upon Promiſes of the greateſt concernment; he did not ſo to them: But then for the other part which is the main of the Argument, that unleſs this mercy be conſign'd by Baptiſm, as good not at all in reſpect of us, becauſe we want the comfort of it; this is the greateſt vanity in the world: For when God hath made a promiſe pertaining alſo to our Children (for ſo our Adverſaries contend, and we alſo acknowledge in its true ſenſe) ſhall not this Promiſe, this word of God be of ſufficient truth, certainty, and efficacy to cauſe comfort, unleſs we tempt God and require a ſign of him? May not Chriſt ſay to theſe men as ſometime to the Jews, *a wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, but no ſign ſhall be given unto it?* But the truth on't is, this

Argument

Argument is nothing but a direct quarelling with God Almighty.

Now ſince there is no ſtrength in the Doctrinal part, the practice and precedents Apoſtoli-
cal and Eccleſiaſtical, will be of leſs concern-
ment, if they were true as is pretended, be-
cauſe actions Apoſtoliſcal are not always Rules
for ever; it might be fit for them to do it
pro loco & tempore, as divers others of their In-
ſtitutions, but yet no engagement paſt thence
upon following Ages; for it might be conveni-
ent at that time, in the new ſpring of Chriſtia-
nity, and till they had engag'd a conſiderable
party, by that means to make them parties
againſt the Gentiles Superſtition, and by way of
pre-occupation to aſcertain them to their own
ſect when they came to be men; or for ſome
other reaſon not tranſmitted to us, becauſe the
Queſtion of fact it ſelf is not ſufficiently deter-
min'd. For the inſinuation of that precept of
baptizing *all Nations*, of which Children certain-
ly are a part, does as little advantage as any of
the reſt, becauſe other parallel expreſſions of
Scripture do determine and expound themſelves
to a ſence that includes not all perſons absolute-
ly, but of a capable condition, as *adore eum*
omnes gentes, & *psallite Deo omnes nationes terra*,
and divers more.

As for the conjecture concerning the Family
of *Stephanus*, at the beſt it is but a conjecture,
and beſides that it is not prov'd that there were
Children in the Family; yet if that were grant-
ed, it follows not that they were baptized,
becauſe by [*whole Families*] in Scripture is meant
all perſons of reaſon and age within the Family;
for it is ſaid, of the Ruler at *Capernaum*,
that he believed and all his houſe: Now you
may

Numb. 23.

Numb. 24.

Joh. 4.

may alſo ſuppoſe that in his houſe were little Babes, that is likely enough, and you may ſuppoſe that they did believe too before they could underſtand, but that's not ſo likely? and then the Argument from baptizing of *Stephen's* houſhold may be allowed juſt as probable: But this is unman-like to build upon ſuch ſlight airy conjectures.

Numb. 25. But Tradition by all means muſt ſupply the place of Scripture, and there is pretended a Tradition Apoſtolical, that Infants were baptized: But at this we are not much moved; For we who rely upon the written Word of God as ſufficient to eſtabliſh all true Religion, do not value the Allegation of Traditions: And however the world goes, none of the-Reformed Churches can pretend this Argument againſt this opinion, becauſe they who reject Tradition when 'tis againſt them, muſt not pretend it at all for them: But if we ſhould allow the Topick to be good, yet how will it be verified? for ſo far as it can yet appear, it relies wholly upon the Teſtimony of *Origen*, for from him *Auſtin* had it. Now a Tradition Apoſtolical if it be not conſign'd with a fuller Teſtimony than of one perſon whom all after-Ages have condemn'd of many errors, will obtain ſo little reputation amongſt thoſe who know that things have upon greater Authority pretended to derive from the Apoſtles, and yet falſly, that it will be a great Argument that he is credulous and weak, that ſhall be determin'd by ſo weak probation in matters of ſo great concernment. And the truth of the buſineſs is, as there was no command of Scripture to oblige Children to the ſuſception of it, ſo the neceſſity of Pædo-baptiſm was not determin'd in the Church till

in the eighth Age after Chriſt, but in the year 418 in the *Milevian* Council, a Provincial of *Africa*, there was a Canon made for Pædo-baptiſm; never till then! I grant it was practiſed in *Africa* before that time, and they or ſome of them thought well of it, and though that be no Argument for us to think ſo, yet none of them did ever before, pretend it to be neceſſary, none to have been a precept of the Goſpel. St. *Auſtin* was the firſt that ever preach'd it to be abſolutely neceſſary, and it was in his heat and anger againſt *Pelagius* who had warm'd and chafed him ſo in that Queſtion, that it made him innovate in other doctrines poſſibly of more concernment than this. And that although this was practiſed anciently in *Africa*, yet that it was without an opinion of neceſſity, and not often there, nor at all in other places, we have the Teſtimony of a learned Pædo-baptiſt, *Ludovicus Vives*, who in his Annotations upon St. *Auſtin*, *De Civit. Dei*, l. i. c. 27. affirms, *Neminem niſi adultum antiquitus ſolere baptizari.*

But beſides that the Tradition cannot be proved to be Apoſtolic; we have very good evidence from Antiquity, that it was the opinion of the Primitive Church, that Infants ought not to be baptiz'd; and this is clear in the ſixth Canon of the Council of *Neocaſarea*, The words are theſe *καὶ κωφορέσης ὅπ δ' εἴ φωνήσας ὅποτε βέλῃ. ἐδὲν γὰρ κοινῶς ἢ πικτεῖσα τῷ πικτομένῳ. διὰ τὸ ἐκάστῃ ἰδίαν ἢ παρὰ αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ δείκνυσθαι*: The ſenſe is this, A Woman with child may be baptized when ſhe pleaſe; For her Baptiſm concerns not the child. The reaſon of the connexion of the parts of that Canon is in the following words, becauſe every one in that Confeſſion is to give a demonſtration of his own choice and election: Meaning plainly,

Y

that

that if the Baptiſm of the Mother did alſo paſs upon the Child, it were not fit for a pregnant Woman to receive Baptiſm, Becauſe in that Sacrament there being a Confeſſion of Faith, which Confeſſion ſuppoſes underſtanding, and free choice, it is not reaſonable the Child ſhould be conſign'd with ſuch a myſtery, ſince it cannot do any act of choice or underſtanding: The Canon ſpeaks reaſon, and it intimates a practice which was abſolutely univerſal in the Church, of interrogating the Catechumens concerning the Articles of Creed: Which is one Argument that either they did not admit Infants to Baptiſm, or that they did prevaricate egregiouſly in aſking Queſtions of them, who themſelves knew were not capable of giving anſwer.

Numb. 27.

*Quid ni ne-
ceſſe eſt (ſic
legit Franc.
Junius in no-
tis ad Tertul)
ſponſores e-
tiam periculo
ingeri qui &
ipſi per mor-
talitatem de-
ſtituere pro-
miſſiones ſu-
as poſſint, &
proventu ma-
lorum indolis fal-
ſi? Tertul. lib.
de baptiſ. cap.
18.*

And to ſupply their incapacity by the Anſwer of a God-Father, is but the ſame unreaſonable-
neſs acted with a worſe circumſtance: And
there is no ſenſible account can be given of it;
for that which ſome imperfectly murmur con-
cerning ſtipulations civil performed by Tutors
in the name of their Pupils, is an abſolute vani-
ty: For what if by poſitive Conſtitution of the
Romans ſuch ſolemnities of Law are required in
all ſtipulations, and by indulgence are permit-
ted in the caſe of a notable benefit accruing to
Minors, muſt God be tyed, and Chriſtian Reli-
gion tranſact her myſteries by proportion and
compliance with the Law of the Romans? I know
God might if he would have appointed God-Fa-
thers to give Anſwer in behalf of the Children,
and to be ſidejuſſors for them; but we cannot
find any Authority or ground that he hath, and
if he had, then it is to be ſuppoſed he would have
given them Commiſſion to have tranſacted the
ſolemnity with better circumſtances, and given
Anſwers

Answers with more truth. For the Queſtion is asked of believing in the preſent. And if the God-Fathers answer in the name of the Child, [*I do believe*] it is notorious they ſpeak falſe and ridiculoſly; For the Infant is not capable of believing, and if he were, he were alſo capable of diſſenting, and how then do they know his mind? And therefore *Tertullian* gives advice that the Baptiſm of Infants ſhould be deferred till they could give an account of their Faith, and the ſame alſo is the Counſel of * *Gregory* Biſhop of *Nazianzum*, although he allows them to haſten it in caſe of neceſſity; for though his reaſon taught him what was fit; yet he was overborn with the practice and opinion of his Age, which began to bear too violently upon him, and yet in another place he makes mention of ſome to whom Baptiſm was not adminiſtered *διὰ νηπιότητα*, by reaſon of Infancy: To which if we add that the Parents of St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, and St. *Ambroſe* although they were Chriſtian, yet did not baptize their Children before they were 30 years of age, it will be very conſiderable in the example, and of great efficacy for deſtroying the ſuppoſed neceſſity or derivation from the Apoſtles.

But however, it is againſt the perpetual Analogy of Chriſt's Doctrin to baptize Infants: For beſides that Chriſt never gave any precept to baptize them, nor ever himſelf nor his Apoſtles (that appears) did baptize any of them; All that either he or his Apoſtles ſaid concerning it, requires ſuch previous diſpoſitions to Baptiſm of which Infants are not capable, and theſe are Faith and Repentance: And not to inſtance in thoſe innumerable places that require Faith before this Sacrament, there needs no more but

Lib. de baptiſ. prope finem, cap. 18. itaque pro perſonæ cujuſque conditione ac diſpoſitione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptiſmi utilior eſt, præcipue tamen circa parvulos Fiant chriſtiani cum Chriſtum noſe potuerint.

• Orat. 40. quæſt. in S. Baptiſma.

Numb. 28.

Mar. 16.

this one ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned*; plainly thus, Faith and Baptiſm in conjunction will bring a man to Heaven; but if he have not Faith, Baptiſm ſhall do him no good. So that if Baptiſm be neceſſary then, ſo is Faith, and much more; for want of Faith damns abſolutely; it is not ſaid ſo of the want of Baptiſm. Now if this decretory ſentence be to be underſtood of perſons of age, and if Children by ſuch an Answer (which indeed is reaſonable enough) be excuſed from the neceſſity of Faith, the want of which regularly does damn, then it is ſottiſh to ſay the ſame incapacity of reaſon and Faith ſhall not excuſe from the actual ſuſception of Baptiſm, which is leſs neceſſary, and to which Faith and many other acts are neceſſary prediſpoſitions when it is reaſonably and humanly received. The Concluſion is, that Baptiſm is alſo to be deferr'd till the time of Faith: And whether Infants have Faith or no, is a Queſtion to be diſputed by perſons that care not how much they ſay, nor how little they prove.

Numb. 29. 1. Personal and actual Faith they have none; for they have no acts of underſtanding; and beſides how can any man know that they have, ſince he never ſaw any ſign of it, neither was he told ſo by any one that could tell? 2. Some ſay they have imputative Faith; but then ſo let the Sacrament be too, that is, if they have the Parents Faith or the Churches, then ſo let Baptiſm be imputed alſo by derivation from them, that as in their Mothers womb, and while they hang on their breſts, they live upon their Mothers nourishment, ſo they may upon the Baptiſm of their Parents or their Mother the Church. For ſince
Faith

Faith is necessary to the susception of Baptism (and they themselves confess it by striving to find out new kinds of Faith to dawb the matter up) such as the Faith is, such must be the Sacrament: For there is no proportion between an actual Sacrament and an imputative Faith, this being in immediate and necessary order to that: And whatsoever can be said to take off from the necessity of actual Faith, all that and much more may be said to excuse from the actual susception of Baptism. 3. The first of these devices was that of *Luther* and his Scholars, the second of *Calvin* and his; and yet there is a third device which the Church of *Rome* teaches, and that is, that Infants have habitual Faith: But who told them so? how can they prove it? what Revelation, or reason teaches any such thing? Are they by this habit so much as disposed to an actual belief without a new Master? Can an Infant sent into a *Mahumetan* Province be more confident for Christianity when he comes to be a Man, than if he had not been baptized? Are there any acts precedent, concomitant or consequent to this pretended habit? This strange invention is absolutely without art, without Scripture, Reason or Authority: But the men are to be excused unless there were a better: But for all these stratagems, the Argument now alledged against the Baptism of Infants is demonstrative and unanswerable.

To which also this consideration may be added, that if Baptism be necessary to the salvation of Infants, upon whom is the imposition laid? To whom is the command given? to the Parents or to the Children? not to the Children, for they are not capable of a Law; nor to the Parents, for then God hath put the salvation of

innocent Babes into the power of others; and Infants may be damn'd for their Fathers careleſſneſs or malice. It follows that it is not neceſſary at all to be done to them, to whom it cannot be preſcrib'd as a Law, and in whoſe behalf it cannot be reaſonably intruſted to others with the appendant neceſſity; and if it be not neceſſary, it is certain it is not reaſonable, and moſt certain it is no where in terms preſcribed, and therefore it is to be preſumed, that it ought to be underſtood and adminiſtered according as other precepts are with reference to the capacity of the ſubject, and the reaſonableneſs of the thing.

Numb. 31. For I conſider, that the baptizing of Infants does ruſh us upon ſuch inconveniences which in other Queſtions we avoid like Rocks, which will appear if we Diſcourſe thus.

Either Baptiſm produces ſpiritual effects, or it produces them not: If it produces not any, why is ſuch contention about it, what are we the nearer heaven if we are baptized? and if it be neglected, what are we the farther off? But if (as without all peradventure all the *Pædo-baptiſts* will ſay) Baptiſm does do a work upon the Soul, producing ſpiritual benefits and advantages, theſe advantages are produc'd by the external work of the Sacrament alone, or by that as it is help'd by the co-operation and prediſpoſitions of the *ſuſcipient*.

If by the external work of the Sacrament alone, how does this differ from the *opus operatum* of the Papiſts, ſave that it is worſe? For they ſay the Sacrament does not produce its effect but in a *ſuſcipient* diſpoſed by all requiſites and due preparatives of Piety, Faith, and Repentance; though in a ſubject ſo diſpoſed, they ſay the Sacrament

crament by its own vertue does it; but this opinion says it does it of it self without the help, or so much as the coexistence of any condition but the meer reception.

But if the Sacrament does not do its work alone, but *per modum recipientis* according to the predispositions of the fuscipient, then because Infants can neither hinder it, nor do any thing to further it, it does them no benefit at all. And if any Man runs for succour to that exploded *κρησφυσιστον*, that Infants have Faith, or any other inspir'd habit of I know not what or how, we desire no more advantage in the World, than that they are constrained to an answer without Revelation, against reason, common sense, and all the experience in the World.

The sum of the Argument in short, is this, though under another representment.

Either Baptism is a meer *Ceremony*, or it implies a *Duty* on our part. If it be a Ceremony only, how does it sanctifie us, or *make the comers thereunto perfect*? If it implies a *Duty* on our part, how then can Children receive it, who cannot do duty at all?

And indeed, this way of Ministration makes Baptism to be wholly an outward duty, a work of the Law, a carnal Ordinance, it makes us adhere to the letter, without regard of the Spirit, to be satisfied with shadows, to return to bondage, to relinquish the mysteriousness, the substance and Spirituality of the Gospel. Which Argument is of so much the more consideration, because under the Spiritual Covenant, or the Gospel of Grace, if *the mystery* goes not before the *Symbol* (which it does when the Symbols are Seals and Consignations of the Grace, as it is said the Sacraments are) yet it always accom-

panies it, but never follows in order of time: And this is clear in the perpetual Analogy of Holy Scripture.

Rom. 6. 3. For Baptiſm is never propounded, mentioned or enjoyn'd as a means of remiſſion of ſins, or of eternal life, but ſomething of duty, choice and ſanctity is joyn'd with it, in order to production of the end ſo mentioned, *Know ye not that as many as are baptized into Chriſt Jeſus, are baptized into his death?* There is the myſtery and the Symbol together, and declared to be perpetually united, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν. All of us who were baptized into one, were baptized into the other. Not only into the Name of Chriſt, but into his Death alſo: But the meaning of this as it is explained in the following words of St. Paul, makes much for our purpoſe: For to be baptized into his Death, ſignifies *to be buried with him in Baptiſm, that as Chriſt roſe from the dead, we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life*: That's the full myſtery of Baptiſm; For being baptized into his Death, or which is all one in the next words, ἐν ὁμοιώματι τῆς θανάτου αὐτοῦ *into the likeneſs of his death*, cannot go alone; Verſ. 4. *if we be ſo planted into Chriſt, we ſhall be partakers of his Reſurrection*, and that is not here inſtanced in precise reward, but in exact Duty, Verſ. 5. for all this is nothing but *crucifixion of the old man, a deſtroying the body of ſin, that we no longer ſerve ſin*. Verſ. 6.

This indeed is truly to be baptized both in the Symbol and the Myſtery: Whatſoever is leſs than this, is but the Symbol only, a meer Ceremony, an *opus operatum*, a dead letter, an empty ſhadow, an inſtrument without an agent to manage, or force to actuate it.

Plain-

Plainer yet: *Whoſoever are baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt, have put on the new man: But to put on this new man, is to be formed in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth: This whole Argument is the very words of St. Paul: The Major propoſition is dogmatically determin'd, Gal. 3. 27. The Minor in Epheſ. 4. 24. The Concluſion then is obvious, that they who are not formed new in righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and truth, they who remaining in the preſent incapacities cannot walk in newneſs of life, they have not been baptized into Chriſt, and then they have but one member of the diſtinction, uſed by St. Peter, they have that Baptiſm which is a putting away the filth of the fleſh; but they have not that Baptiſm which is the answer of a good conſcience to-* 1 Pet. 3. 21.
wards God, which is the only Baptiſm that ſaves us: And this is the caſe of Children; And then the caſe is thus.

As Infants by the force of nature cannot put themſelves into a ſupernatural condition, (and therefore ſay the *Pado-baptiſts*, they need Baptiſm to put them into it:) ſo if they be baptized before the uſe of reaſon, before the *works of the Spirit*, before the operations of Grace, before they can throw off *the works of darkneſs*, and live in *righteouſneſs and newneſs of life*, they are never the nearer: From the pains of Hell they ſhall be ſaved by the mercies of God and their own innocence, though they die *in puris naturalibus*, and Baptiſm will carry them no further. For that *Baptiſm that ſaves us*, is not the only *washing with water*, of which only, Children are capable, *but the answer of a good conſcience towards God*, of which they are not capable till the uſe of reaſon, till they know to chuſe the good and reſuſe the evil.

And

And from thence I conſider anew, That all vows made by perſons under others Names, ſtipulations made by *Minors* are not valid till they by a ſupervening act after they are of ſufficient age do ratifie them. Why then may not Infants as well make the vow *de novo*, as *de novo* ratifie that which was made for them *ab antiquo* when they come to years of choice? If the *Infant* vow be invalid till the *Manly* confirmation, why were it not as good they ſtaid to make it till that time, before which if they do make it, it is to no purpoſe? This would be conſidered.

vide Eraſ.
mum in præ-
fat. ad Anno-
tat. in Matth.

Numb. 32. And in Concluſion, our way is the ſurer way, for not to baptize Children till they can give an account of their Faith is the moſt proportionable to an act of reaſon and humanity, and it can have no danger in it: For to ſay that Infants may be damn'd for want of Baptiſm, (a thing which is not in their power to acquire, they being perſons not yet capable of a Law) is to affirm that of God which we dare not ſay of any wiſe and good man. Certainly it is much derogatory to Gods Juſtice and a plain defiance to the infinite reputation of his goodneſs.

Numb. 33. And therefore, who ever will pertinaciously perſiſt in this opinion of the Pædo-baptiſts and practiſe it accordingly, they pollute the blood of the everlaſting Teſtament, they diſhonour and make a pageantry of the Sacrament, they ineffectually repreſent a ſepulture into the death of Chriſt, and pleaſe themſelves in a ſign without effect, making Baptiſm like the fig-tree in the Goſpel, full of leaves but no fruit; and they invoke the holy Ghoſt in vain, doing as if one ſhould call upon him to illuminate a ſtone, or a tree.

Thus

Thus far the *Anabaptiſts* may argue, and men have Diſputed againſt them with ſo much weakneſs and confidence, that they have been encouraged in their Error * more by the accidental advantages we have given them by our weak arguments, than by any truth of their cauſe, or excellency of their wit. But the uſe I make of it as to our preſent Queſtion is this: That ſince there is no direct impiety in the opinion, nor any that is apparently conſequent to it, and they with ſo much probability do or may pretend to true perſuaſion, they are with all means, Chriſtian, fair, and humane, to be redargued, or inſtructed, but if they cannot be perſuaded they muſt be left to God, who knows every degree of every mans underſtanding, all his weakneſſes and ſtrengths, what impreſs each Argument makes upon his Spirit, and how unreſiſtible every reaſon is, and he alone judges his innocency and ſincerity; and for that Queſtion, I think there is ſo much to be pretended againſt that, which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than evidence on our ſide, and therefore we may be confident as for our own particulars, but not too forward peremptorily to preſcribe to others, much leſs damn, or to kill, or to perſecute them that only in this particular diſagree.

Numb. 34.

*ἐκ ἐν τοῖς
ἐαυτῶν
δύναμι
τῶν ἰσχυ
ἐχούτες,
ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς
ἡμετέροις
παντοῖς
ταῦτα
διπλῶντες,
as Nazianzen
obſerves of
the caſe of
the Church
in his time.

SECT.

S E C T. XIX.

*That there may be no Toleration of Doctrines
inconfiſtent with piety or the publick good.*

Numb. 1.

BUT then for their capital Opinion, with all its branches, that it is not lawful for Princes to put Malefactors to death, nor to take up defensive Arms, nor to miniſter an Oath, nor to contend in judgment, it is not to be diſputed with ſuch liberty as the former: For although it be part of that Doctrine which *Clemens Alexandrinus* ſays was delivered *per ſecretam traditionem Apoſtolorum, Non licere Chriſtianis contendere in Judio, nec coram gentibus, nec coram ſanctis, & perfectum non debere jurare*; and the other part ſeems to be warranted by the eleventh Canon of the *Nicene* Council, which enjoyns penance to them that take Arms after their conversion to Chriſtianity; yet either theſe Authorities are to be ſlighted, or be made receptive of any interpretation rather than the Commonwealth be diſarmed of its neceſſary ſupports, and all Laws made ineffectual and impertinent: For the intereſt of the republick, and the well being of bodies politick is not to depend upon the nicety of our imaginations, or the fancies of any peeviſh or miſtaken Priests, and there is no reaſon a Prince ſhould ask *John-a-Brunck*, whether his underſtanding will give him leave to reign, and be a King: Nay ſuppoſe there were divers places of Scripture, which did ſeemingly reſtrain the Political uſe of the Sword, yet ſince the avoiding a perſonal inconvenience, hath by all men been accounted ſuffi-

sufficient reason to expound Scripture to any sense rather than the literal, which infers an unreasonable inconvenience, (and therefore the *pulling out an eye, and the cutting of an hand,* is expounded by mortifying a vice, and killing a criminal habit) much rather must the Allegations against the power of the Sword endure any sence rather than it should be thought that Christianity should destroy that which is the only instrument of Justice, the restraint of vice and support of bodies politick. It is certain that Christ and his Apostles, and Christian Religion did comply with the most absolute Government, and the most imperial that was then in the world; and it could not have been at all indured in the world if it had not; for indeed the world it self could not last in regular and orderly communities of men, but be a perpetual confusion, if Princes and the Supreme Power in Bodies Politick, were not armed with a coercive power to punish Malefactors: The publick necessity, and universal experience of all the world convinces those men of being most unreasonable, that make such pretences which destroy all Laws, and all Communities, and the bands of civil Societies, and leave it arbitrary to every vain or vitious person, whether men shall be safe, or Laws be established, or a Murderer hang'd, or Princes Rule. So that in this case men are not so much to Dispute with particular Arguments, as to consider the Interest and concernment of Kingdoms and Publick Societies; For the Religion of Jesus Christ is the best establisher of the felicity of private persons, and of publick Communities: It is a Religion that is prudent and innocent, humane, and reasonable, and brought infinite advantages
to

to mankind, but no inconvenience, nothing that is unnatural, or unfociable, or unjuſt. And if it be certain that this world cannot be governed without Laws, and Laws without a compulſory ſignifie nothing, then its certain, that it is no good Religion that teaches Doctrines whoſe conſequents will deſtroy all Government; and therefore it is as much to be rooted out, as any thing that is the greateſt peſt and nuisance to the publick intereſt: And that we may gueſs at the purpoſes of the men, and the inconvenience of ſuch Doctrines: theſe men that did firſt intend by their Doctrines to diſarm all Princes, and bodies Politick, did themſelves take up arms to eſtabliſh their wild, and impious fancy; and indeed that Prince or Common-wealth that ſhould be perſuaded by them, would be expoſed to all the inſolencies of Forreigners, and all mutinies of the teachers themſelves, and the Governours of the people could not do that duty they owe to their people of protecting them from the rapine and malice which will be in the world as long as the world is. And therefore, here they are to be reſtrained from preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they mean to preſerve their Government, and the neceſſity of the thing will juſtify the lawfulness of the thing: If they think it to themſelves, that cannot be helped ſo long it is innocent as much as concerns the Publick; but if they preach it, they may be accounted Authors of all the conſequent inconveniences, and puniſht accordingly: *No Doctrine that deſtroys Government is to be endured*; For although thoſe Doctrines are not always good that ſerve the private ends of Princes, or the ſecret deſigns of State, which by reaſon of ſome accidents or imperfections of men may be promoted by that which is falſe and pretending,

ing, yet no Doctrines can be good that does not comply with the formality of Government it ſelf, and the well being of bodies Politick; *Au-* Cicero de
gur cum eſſet Cato, dicere auſus eſt, optimis au- ſenectute.
ſpiciis ea geri quæ pro Reipub. ſalute gererentur;
quæ contra Rempub. fierent contra auſpicia fieri:
Religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to do it diſadvantage, and therefore thoſe Doctrines that inconvenience the Publick, are no parts of good Religion; *ut Reſpub. ſalva ſit,* is a neceſſary conſideration in the permiſſion of Propheſyings: for according to the true, ſolid and prudent ends of the Republick, ſo is the Doctrine to be permitted or reſtrained, and the men that preach it according as they are good Subjects, and right Common-wealths men: For Religion is a thing ſuperinduced to temporal Government, and the Church is an addition of a capacity to a Common-wealth, and therefore is in no ſence to diſſerve the neceſſity and juſt intereſts of that to which it is ſuper-added for its advantage and conſervation.

And thus by a proportion to the Rules of *Numb. 2.* theſe inſtances, all their other Doctrines are to have their judgment, as concerning Toleration or reſtraint; for all are either ſpeculative, or practical, they are conſiſtent with the Publick ends or inconſiſtent, they teach impiety or they are innocent, and they are to be permitted or rejected accordingly. For in the Queſtion of Toleration, the foundation of Faith, good life and Government is to be ſecured; in all others caſes, the former conſiderations are effectual.

SECT.

S E C T. XX.

How far the Religion of the Church of Rome is Tolerable.

Numb. 1.

BUT now concerning the Religion of the Church of *Rome* (which was the other inſtance I promiſed to conſider) we will proceed another way, and not conſider the truth or falſity of the Doctrines; for that is not the beſt way to determine this Queſtion concerning permitting their Religion or Aſſemblies; becauſe that a thing is not true, is not Argument ſufficient to conclude that he that believes it true is not to be endured; but we are to conſider what inducements there are that poſſeſs the underſtanding of thoſe men, whether they be reaſonable and innocent, ſufficient to abuſe or perſuade wiſe and good men, or whether the Doctrines be commenc'd upon deſign, and manag'd with impiety, and then have effects not to be endured.

Numb. 2.

And here firſt, I conſider that thoſe Doctrines that have had long continuance and poſſeſſion in the Church, cannot eaſily be ſuppoſed in the preſent Profeſſors to be a deſign, ſince they have received it from ſo many Ages, and it is not likely that all Ages ſhould have the ſame purpoſes, or that the ſame Doctrine ſhould ſerve the ſeveral ends of divers Ages. But however, long preſcription is a prejudice, oftentimes ſo inſupportable, that it cannot with many Arguments be retrenched, as relying upon theſe grounds, that truth is more certain than falſhood, that God would not for ſo many Ages forſake his Church, and leave her in error; that whatſoever

is

is new, is not only ſuſpicious, but falſe; which are ſuppoſitions, pious and plausible enough. And if the Church of *Rome* had communicated Infants ſo long as ſhe hath prayed to Saints, or baptized Infants, the communicating would have been believed with as much confidence, as the other Articles are, and the diſſentients with as much impatience rejected. But this conſideration is to be enlarg'd upon all thoſe particulars; which as they are apt to abuſe the perſons of the men and amuſe their underſtandings, ſo they are inſtruments of their excuſe, and by making their errors to be invincible, and their opinions, though falſe, yet not criminal, make it alſo to be an effect of reaſon and charity, to permit the men a liberty of their Conſcience, and let them answer to God for themſelves and their own opinions: Such as are the beauty and ſplendor of their Church; their pompous Service; the ſtatelineſs and ſolemnity of the Hierarchy; their name of Catholick, which they ſuppoſe their own due, and to concern no other Sect of Chriſtians; the Antiquity of many of their Doctrines; the continual Succeſſion of their Biſhops; their immediate derivation from the Apoſtles; their Title to ſucceed *St. Peter*; the ſuppoſal and pretence of his perſonal Prerogatives; the advantages which the conjunction of the Imperial Seat with their Epiſcopal hath brought to that See; the flattering expreſſions of minor Biſhops, which by being old Records, have obtain'd credibility; the multitude and variety of people which are of their perſuaſion; apparent conſent with Antiquity in many Ceremonies which other Churches have rejected; and a pretended, and ſometimes an apparent conſent with ſome older Ages in many matters doctrinal; the ad-

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vantage which is derived to them by entertaining some personal opinions of the Fathers, which they with infinite clamours see to be cryed up to be a Doctrine of the Church of that time; The great consent of one part with another in that which most of them affirm to be *de fide*; the great differences which are commenc'd amongst their Adversaries, abusing the Liberty of Prophesying unto a very great Licentiousness; their happiness of being instruments in converting divers Nations; the advantages of Monarchical Government, the benefit of which as well as the inconveniences (which though they feel they consider not) they daily do enjoy; the piety and the austerity of their Religious Orders of men and women; the single life of their Priests and Bishops; the riches of their Church; the severity of their Fasts and their exterior observances; the great reputation of their first Bishops for Faith and Sanctity; the known holiness of some of those persons whose Institutes the Religious Persons pretend to imitate; their Miracles false or true, substantial or imaginary; the casualties and accidents that have happened to their Adversaries, which being chances of humanity are attributed to several causes according as the fancies of men and their Interests are pleased or satisfied; the temporal felicity of their Professors; the oblique arts and indirect proceedings of some of those who departed from them; and amongst many other things, the names of Heretick and Schismatick, which they with infinite pertinacy fasten upon all that disagree from them; These things and divers others may very easily persuade persons of much reason and more piety, to retain that which they know to have been the Religion of their fore-

fore-Fathers, which had actual poſſeſſion and ſeizure of mens underſtandings before the opposite profeſſions had a name; and ſo much the rather becauſe Religion hath more advantages upon the fancy and affections, than it hath upon Philoſophy and ſevere diſcourſes, and therefore is the more eaſily perſuaded upon ſuch grounds as theſe, which are more apt to amuſe than to ſatiſſie the underſtanding.

Secondly, If we conſider the Doctrines themſelves, we ſhall find them to be ſuperſtructures ill built, and worſe manag'd, but yet they keep the foundation, they build upon God in Jeſus Chriſt, they profeſs the Apoſtles Creed, they retain Faith and Repentance as the ſupporters of all our hopes of Heaven, and believe many more truths than can be proved to be of ſimple and original neceſſity to ſalvation: And therefore all the wiſeſt Perſonages of the adverſe party allowed to them poſſibility of ſalvation, whiſt their errors are not faults of their will, but weakneſſes and deceptions of the underſtanding. So that there is nothing in the *foundation of Faith*, that can reaſonably hinder them to be permitted: The foundation of Faith ſtands ſecure enough for all their vain and unhandſome ſuperſtructures.

Numb. 3.

But then on the other ſide, if we take account of their Doctrines as they relate to good life, or are conſiſtent or inſiſtent with civil Government, we ſhall have other conſiderations.

Numb. 4.

Thirdly, For I conſider, that many of their Doctrines do accidentally teach or lead to ill life, and it will appear to any man that conſiders the reſult of theſe propoſitions: Attrition (which is a low and imperfect degree of ſorrow for ſin, or as others ſay a ſorrow for ſin com-

menc'd upon any reaſon of temporal hope, or fear or deſire or any thing elſe) is a ſufficient diſpoſition for a man in the Sacrament of penance to receive abſolution, and be juſtified before God, by taking away the guilt of all his ſins, and the obligation to eternal pains. So that already the fear of Hell is quite removed upon conditions ſo eaſie, that many men take more pains to get a groat, than by this Doctrin we are oblig'd to, for the curing and acquitting all the greateſt ſins of a whole life, of the moſt vitious perſon in the world: And but that they affright their people with a fear of Purgatory, or with the ſeverity of Penances in caſe they will not venter for Purgatory (for by their Doctrin they may chuſe or reſuſe either) there would be nothing in their Doctrin or Diſcipline to impede and ſlacken their proclivity to ſin; but then they have as eaſy a cure for that too, with a little more charge ſometimes, but moſt commonly with leſs trouble: For there are ſo many confraternities, ſo many privileged Churches, Altars, Monasteries, Cœmeteries, Offices, Feſtivals, and ſo free a conceſſion of Indulgences appendant to all theſe, and a thouſand fine devices to take away the fear of Purgatory, to commute or expiate Penances, that in no ſect of men, do they with more eaſe and cheapneſs reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of Heaven, than in the Roman Communion.

Numb. 5. And indeed if men would conſider things upon their true grounds, the Church of *Rome* ſhould be more reprov'd upon Doctrines that infer ill life, than upon ſuch as are contrariant to Faith. For falſe ſuperſtructures do not always deſtroy Faith; but many of the Doctrines they teach if they were proſecuted to the utmoſt
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issue would deſtroy good life : And therefore my quarrel with the Church of *Rome* is greater and ſtronger upon ſuch points which are not uſually conſider'd, than it is upon the ordinary diſputes, which have to no very great purpoſe ſo much diſturb'd Chriſtendom : And I am more ſcandaliz'd at her for teaching the ſufficiency of Attrition in the Sacrament, for indulging Penances ſo frequently, for remitting all Diſcipline, for making ſo great a part of Religion to conſiſt in externals and Ceremonials, for putting more force and Energy and exacting with more ſeverity the commandments of men than the precepts of Juſtice, and internal Religion : Laſtly beſides many other things, for promiſing Heaven to perſons after a wicked life upon their impertinent cryes and Ceremonials tranſacted by the Priest and the dying Perſon : I confeſs I wiſh the zeal of Chriſtendom were a little more active againſt theſe and the like Doctrines, and that men would write and live more earneſtly againſt them than as yet they have done.

But then what influence this juſt zeal is to *Numb. 6.* have upon the perſons of the Profeſſors is another conſideration : For as the Pharifees did preach well and lived ill, and therefore were to be heard not imitated : So if theſe men live well though they teach ill, they are to be imitated not heard : their Doctrines by all means, Chriſtian and humane, are to be diſcountenanc'd, but their perſons tolerated *eatenus* ; their Profeſſion and Decrees to be rejected and condemn'd, but the perſons to be permitted, becauſe by their good lives they confute their Doctrines, that is, they give evidence, that they think no evil to be conſequent to ſuch opinions, and if they did, that they live good lives, is argument

sufficient that they would themselves cast the first stone against their own opinions, if they thought them guilty of such misdemeanours.

Numb. 7.

Fourthly, But if we consider their Doctrines in relation to Government, and Publick societies of men, then if they prove faulty, they are so much the more intolerable by how much the consequents are of greater danger and malice: Such Doctrines as these, The Pope may dispense with all oaths taken to God or man: He may absolve Subjects from their Allegiance to their natural Prince: Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks, Heretical Princes may be slain by their Subjects. These Propositions are so deprest, and do so immediately communicate with matter and the interests of men, that they are of the same consideration with matters of fact, and are to be handled accordingly. To other Doctrines ill life may be consequent; but the connexion of the antecedent and the consequent is not (peradventure) perceiv'd or acknowledged by him that believes the opinion with no greater confidence than he disavows the effect and issue of it. But in these, the ill effect is the direct profession and purpose of the opinion, and therefore the man and the mans opinion is to be dealt withall, just as the matter of fact is to be judg'd; for it is an immediate, a perceiv'd, a direct event, and the very purpose of the opinion. Now these opinions are a direct overthrow to all humane society, and mutual commerce, a destruction of Government, and of the laws and duty and subordination which we owe to Princes; and therefore those men of the Church of *Rome* that do hold them, and preach them cannot pretend to the excuses of innocent opinions, and hearty persuasion,

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to the weakneſs of humanity and the difficulty of things; for God hath not left thoſe truths which are neceſſary for conſervation of publick ſocieties of men, ſo intricate and obſcure, but that every one that is honeſt and deſirous to underſtand his duty, will certainly know that no Chriſtian truth deſtroys a mans being ſociable and a member of the body Politick, co-operating to the conſervation of the whole as well as of it ſelf. However if it might happen that men ſhould ſincerely err in ſuch plain matters of fact (for there are fools enough in the world) yet if he hold his peace, no man is to perſecute or puniſh him, for then it is mere opinion which comes not under Political Cogniſance, that is, that Cogniſance which only can puniſh corporally; but if he preaches it, he is actually a Traytor, or Seditious, or Author of Perjury, or a deſtroyer of humane Society, reſpectively to the nature of the Doctrines; and the preaching ſuch Doctrines cannot claim the privilege and immunity of a mere opinion, becauſe it is as much matter of fact, as any the actions of his diſciples and confidants, and therefore in ſuch caſes is not to be permitted, but judg'd according to the nature of the effect it hath or may have upon the actions of men.

Fifthly: But laſtly, In matters meerly ſpeculative, the caſe is wholly altered, becauſe the body Politick which only may lawfully uſe the ſword, is not a competent Judge of ſuch matters which have not direct influence upon the body Politick, or upon the lives and manners of men as they are parts of a Community (not but that Princes or Judges Temporal may have as much ability, as others, but by reaſon of the incompetency of the Authority ;) And

Act. 18. 4.

Galio spoke wisely, when he discoursed thus to the Jews, *If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lawdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should hear you; But if it be a question of words and names, and of your Law, look ye to it; for I will be no Judge of such matters:* The man spoke excellent reason; for the Cognisance of these things did appertain to men of the other robe: but the Ecclesiastical power, which only is competent to take notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the Temporal sword or corporal inflictions: The meer doctrines and opinions of men are things Spiritual, and therefore not Cognoscible by a temporal Authority; and the Ecclesiastical Authority, which is to take Cognisance is it self so Spiritual, that it cannot inflict any punishment corporal.

Numb. 3.

And it is not enough to say that when the Magistrate restrains the preaching such opinions, if any man preaches them he may be punished (and then it is not for his opinion but his disobedience that he is punished) for the temporal power ought not to restrain Prophecyings, where the publick peace and interest is not certainly concern'd. And therefore it is not sufficient to excuse him, whose Law in that case being by an incompetent power made a scruple where there was no sin.

Numb. 10.

And under this consideration, come very many Articles of the Church of *Rome*, which are wholly speculative, which do not derive upon practice, which begin in the understanding and rest there, and have no influence upon life and government, but very accidentally, and by a great many removes, and therefore are to be considered only so far as to guide men in their persuasions, but have no effect upon the persons

perſons of men, their bodies, or their temporal condition : I inſtance in two ; Prayer for the dead, and the Doctrin of Tranſubſtantiation, theſe two to be inſtead of all the reſt.

For the firſt, This Diſcourſe is to ſuppoſe it *Numb. 11.* falſe, and we are to direct our proceedings accordingly : And therefore I ſhall not need to urge with how many fair words and gay pretences, this Doctrin is ſet off, apt either to cozen or inſtruct the conſcience of the wiſeſt according as it is true or falſe reſpectively. But we find (ſays the Romaniſt) in the Hiſtory of the *Maccabees*, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead (which alſo appears by other Teſtimonies, and by their form of prayers ſtill extant which they uſed in the Captivity) it is very conſiderable, that ſince our bleſſed Saviour did reprove all the evil Doctrines and Traditions of the Scribes and Pharifees, and did argue concerning the dead and the Reſurrection againſt the Sadduces, yet he ſpake no word againſt this publick practice, but left it as he found it, which he who came to declare to us all the will of his Father would not have done if it had not been innocent, pious and full of charity. To which by way of conſociation, if we add that *St. Paul* did pray for *Onesiphorus*. *2 Tim. 1. 18.* That God would ſhow him a mercy in that day, that is, according to the ſtile of the New Teſtament, the day of Judgment : The reſult will be, that although it be probable, that *Onesiphorus* at that time was dead (becauſe in his ſalutations he ſalutes his houſhold, without naming him who was the *Major domo*, againſt his cuſtom of ſalutations in other places :) Yet beſides this, the prayer was for ſuch a bleſſing to him whoſe demonſtration and reception could

could not be but after death; which implies clearly, that then there is a need of mercy, and by conſequence the dead people even to the day of Judgment incluſively are the ſubject of a miſery, the object of Gods mercy, and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more glory in the re-union, but to pity them to ſuch purpoſes in which they need; which becauſe they are not revealed to us in particular, it hinders us not in recommending the perſons in particular to Gods mercy, but ſhould rather excite our charity and devotion: For it being certain that they have a need of mercy, and it being uncertain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earneſt as not knowing the greatneſs of their neceſſity.

Numb. 12. And if there ſhould be any uncertainty in theſe Arguments, yet its having been the univerſal practice of the Church of God in all places, and in all Ages till within theſe hundred years, is a very great inducement for any member of the Church to believe that in the firſt Traditions of Chriſtianity, and the Inſtitutions Apoſtolical, there was nothing delivered againſt this practice, but very much to inſinuate or enjoin it; becauſe the practice of it was at the firſt, and was univerſal. And if any man ſhall doubt of this, he ſhews nothing but that he is ignorant of the Records of the Church, it being plain in *Tertullian* and St. * *Cyprian* (who were the eldeſt Writers of the Latin Church) that in their times, it was *ab antiquo*, the cuſtom of the Church to pray for the Souls of the Faithful departed, in the dreadful myſteries:

De corona
milit. c. 3. &
de monogam. c. 10.
* Ep. 66.

ſteries: And it was an Inſtitution Apoſtolicall (ſays one of them) and ſo tranſmitted to the following Ages of the Church, and when once it began upon ſlight and diſcontent to be conteſted againſt by *Aerius*, the man was preſently condemn'd for a Heretick, as appears in *Epiphanius*.

But I am not to conſider the Arguments for the Doctrin it ſelf, although the probability and fair pretence of them may help to excuſe ſuch perſons who upon theſe or the like grounds do heartily believe it. But I am to conſider that whether it be true or falſe, there is no manner of malice in it, and at the worſt, it is but a wrong error upon the right ſide of charity, and concluded againſt by its Adverſaries upon the confidence of ſuch Arguments, which poſſibly are not ſo probable as the grounds pretended for it.

And if the ſame judgment might be made of any more of their Doctrines, I think it were better men were not furious, in the condemning ſuch Queſtions which either they underſtood not upon the grounds of their proper Arguments, or at leaſt conſider not, as ſubjected in the perſons, and leſſened by circumſtances, by the innocency of the event, or other prudential conſiderations.

But the other Article is harder to be judged of, and hath made greater ſtirrs in Chriſtendom, and hath been daſht with more impetuous objections, and ſuch as do more trouble the Queſtion of Toleration. For if the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation be falſe (as upon much evidence we believe it is) then tis accuſed of introducing Idolatry, giving Divine worſhip to a Creature, adoring of bread and wine, and then

Deut. 13.

Numb. 16.

then comes in the precept of God to the Jews, that thoſe Prophets who perſuaded to Idolatry ſhould be ſlain.

But here we muſt deliberate, for it is concerning the lives of men, and yet a little deliberation may ſuffice; For Idolatry is a forſaking the true God, and giving Divine Worſhip to a Creature or to an Idol, that is, to an imaginary god, who hath no foundation in eſſence or exiſtence: And is that kind of ſuperſtition which by Divines is called the ſuperſtition of an undue object: Now it is evident that the Object of their Adoration (that which is repreſented to them in their minds, their thoughts, and purpoſes, and by which God principally if not ſolely takes eſtimate of humane actions) in the bleſſed Sacrament, is the only true and eternal God, hypotatically joyned with his Holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually preſent under the veil of the Sacramental ſigns: And if they thought him not preſent, they are ſo far from worſhipping the bread in this caſe, that themſelves profeſs it to be Idolatry to do ſo, which is a demonſtration that their Soul hath nothing in it that is Idololatrical. If their confidence and fanciful opinion hath engag'd them upon ſo great miſtake (as without doubt it hath) yet the will hath nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to Idolatry, *Et nihil ardet in inferno niſi propria voluntas*: And although they have done violence to all Philoſophy, and the reaſon of man, and undone and cancelled the principles of two or three Sciences, to bring in this Article, yet they have a Divine Revelation whoſe literal and Grammatical ſence, if that ſence were intended, would warrant them to do violence to all the Sciences in

in the Circle; and indeed that, Transubstantiation is openly and violently against natural reason, is an Argument to make them disbelieve, who believe the mystery of the Trinity in all those niceties of explication which are in the School (and which now adays pass for the Doctrine of the Church) with as much violence to the principles of natural and supernatural Philosophy, as can be imagin'd to be in the point of Transubstantiation.

1. But for the Article it self, we all say that *Numb. 17.* Christ is there present some way or other extraordinary; and it will not be amiss to worship him at that time, when he gives himself to us in so mysterious a manner, and with so great advantages; especially since the whole Office is a Consecration of divers actions of Religion and Divine Worship. Now in all opinions of those men who think it an act of Religion to communicate and to offer; a Divine Worship is given to Christ, and is transmitted to him by mediation of that action and that Sacrament, and it is no more in the Church of *Rome*, but that they differ and mistake infinitely in the manner of his presence; which error is wholly seated in the Understanding, and does not communicate with the will; for all agree that the Divinity and the Humanity of the Son of God is the ultimate and adequate object of Divine Adoration, and that it is incommunicable to any creature whatsoever, and before they venture to pass an Act of Adoration, they believe the bread to be annihilated or turn'd into his substance who may lawfully be worshipped; and they who have these thoughts, are as much enemies of Idolatry, as they that understand better how to avoid that
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inconvenience which is ſuppoſed to be the crime, which they formally hate, and we materially avoid : This conſideration was concerning the Doctrines it ſelf.

Numb. 18. 2. And now for any danger to mens perſons for ſuffering ſuch a Doctrine, this I ſhall ſay, that if they who do it, are not formally guilty of Idolatry, there is no danger that they whom they perſuade to it ſhould be guilty ; and what perſons ſoever believe it to be Idolatry, to worſhip the Sacrament, while that perſuaſion remains will never be brought to it, there is no fear of that : And he that perſuades them to do it by altering their perſuaſions and beliefs, does no hurt but altering the opinions of the men, and abuſing their underſtandings ; but when they believe it to be no Idolatry, then their ſo believing it is ſufficient ſecurity from that crime which hath ſo great a tincture and reſidency in the will, that from thence only it hath its being criminal.

Numb. 19. 3. However, if it were Idolatry, I think the Precept of God to the Jews of killing falſe and Idolatrous Prophets will be no warrant for Chriſtians ſo to do : For in the caſe of the Apoſtles and the men of *Samaria*, when *James* and *John* would have call'd for fire to deſtroy them even as *Elias* did under *Moses's* Law, Chriſt diſtinguiſhed the Spirit of *Elias* from his own Spirit, and taught them a leſſon of greater ſweetneſs, and conſign'd this truth to all Ages of the Church, that ſuch ſeverity is not conſiſtent with the meekneſs which Chriſt by his example and Sermons hath made a precept Evangelical : At moſt it was but a Judicial Law and no more of Argument to make it neceſſary to us, than the Moſaical precepts of putting Adul-

Adulterers to death, and trying the accused persons by the waters of jealousy.

And thus in these two Instances, I have given *Numb. 20.* account what is to be done in Toleration of diversity of opinions: The result of which is principally this: Let the Prince and the Secular Power have a care the Common-wealth be safe. For whether such or such a Sect of Christians be to be permitted is a question rather Political than Religious; for as for the concerns of Religion, these instances have furnished us with sufficient to determine us in our duties as to that particular, and by one of these all particulars may be judged.

And now it were a strange inhumanity to permit *Numb. 21.* Jews in a Common-wealth, whose interest is served by their inhabitation, and yet upon equal grounds of State and Policy, not to permit differing Sects of Christians: For although possibly there is more danger, mens persuasions should be altered in a commixture of divers Sects of Christians, yet there is not so much danger when they are changed from Christian to Christian, as if they be turn'd from Christian to Jew, as many are daily in *Spain* and *Portugal*.

And this is not to be excused by saying the *Numb. 22.* Church hath no power over them *qui foris sunt* as Jews are: For it is true the Church in the capacity of Spiritual regiments hath nothing to do with them, because they are not her Dioceses: Yet the Prince hath to do with them, when they are subjects of his regiment: They may not be Excommunicate any more than a stone may be kill'd, because they are not of the Christian Communion, but they are living persons, parts of the Common Wealth, infinitely deceived in their Religion, and very dangerous
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if they offer to perſuade men to their opinions, and are the greateſt enemies of Chriſt whoſe honour and the intereſt of whoſe Service a Chriſtian Prince is bound with all his power to maintain. And when the Queſtion is of puniſhing diſagreeing perſons with death, the Church hath equally nothing to do with them both, for ſhe hath nothing to do with the temporal ſword, but the Prince whoſe Subjects equally Chriſtians and Jews are, hath equal power over their perſons; for a Chriſtian is no more a Subject than a Jew is; The Prince hath upon them both the ſame power of life and death, ſo that the Jew by being no Chriſtian is not *foris*, or any more an exempt perſon for his body, or his life than the Chriſtian is: And yet in all Churches where the ſecular power hath temporal reaſon to tolerate the Jews, they are tolerated without any ſcruple in Religion; which thing is of more conſideration, becauſe the Jews are direct Blaſphemers of the Son of God, and Blaſphemy by their own Law the Law of *Mofes* is made capital; And might with greater reaſon be inflicted upon them, who acknowledge its obligation then urg'd upon Chriſtians as an Authority, enabling Princes to put them to death, who are accused of accidental and conſequutive Blaſphemy and Idolatry reſpectively, which yet they hate and diſavow with much zeal and heartineſs of perſuaſion. And I cannot yet learn a reaſon why we ſhall not be more complying with them, who are of the houſhold of Faith; for at leaſt they are children though they be but rebellious children (and if they were not, what hath the Mother to do with them any more than with the Jews? they are in ſome relation or habitude of the Family,

Family, for they are conſigned with the ſame Baptiſm, profeſs the ſame Faith delivered by the Apoſtles, are erected in the ſame hope, and look for the ſame glory to be revealed to them; at the coming of their common Lord and Saviour, to whoſe Service according to their underſtanding they have vowed themſelves: And if the diſagreeing perſons be to be eſteemed as Heathens and Publicans, yet not worſe, *Have no company with them*, that's the worſt that is to be done to ſuch a man in St. Paul's judgment, *Yet count him not as an Enemy, but admoniſh him as a Brother.*

S E C T. XXI.

Of the duty of particular Churches in allowing Communion.

FROM theſe premiſes, we are eaſily inſtrumented concerning the lawfulness or duty reſpectively of Chriſtian Communion, which is differently to be conſidered in reſpect of particular Churches to each other, and of particular men to particular Churches: For as for particular Churches, they are bound to allow Communion to all thoſe that profeſs the ſame Faith upon which the Apoſtles did give Communion; For whatſoever preſerves us as Members of the Church, gives us title to the Communion of Saints, and whatſoever Faith or belief that is to which God hath promiſed Heaven, that Faith makes us Members of the Catholick Church: Since therefore the Judicial Acts of the Church are then moſt prudent and religious when they near-

Numb. 1.

est imitate the example and piety of God: To make the way to Heaven straighter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with those whom God will vouchsafe to be united, and to refuse our charity to those who have the same Faith, because they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing necessary which we overvalue; is impious and schismatical, it inferrs Tyranny on one part, and persuades and tempts to uncharitableness and animosities on both; It dissolves Societies, and is an enemy to peace, it busies men in impertinent wranglings, and by names of men and titles of factions it consigns the interessed parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect those advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of Christian Religion and Societies.

Numb. 2.

And therefore *Vincentius Lirinensis*, and indeed the whole Church accounted the *Donatists* Hereticks upon this very ground, because they did imperiously deny their Communion to all that were not of their persuasion; whereas the Authors of that opinion for which they first did separate, and make a Sect, because they did not break the Churches peace nor magisterially prescrib'd to others, were in that disagreeing and error accounted Catholics, *Divisio enim & dis-unio facit vos hereticos, pax & unitas faciunt Catholicos*, said St. *Austin*; and to this sense is that of St. *Paul*, *If I had all faith and not charity, I am nothing*: He who upon confidence of his true belief denies a charitable Communion to his brother, loses the reward of both. And if Pope *Victor* had been as charitable to the *Asiatics* as Pope *Anicetus*, and St. *Polycarp* were to each other in the same disagreeing concerning Easter,

Victor

Victor had not been *πληλικοῦρον καταπείμενος*,
ſo bitterly reprov'd and condemn'd as he was
for the uncharitable managing of his diſagreeing
by *Polycrates* and *Irenæus*; *Concordia enim quæ eſt* Euseb. l. 5. c.
charitatis effectus eſt unio voluntatum non opinionum. 25, 26.

True Faith which leads to charity leads on to
that which unites wills and affections not opi- Aquin. 22. 2.
nions. q 37 a 1.

Upon theſe or the like conſiderations, the Numb. 3.
Emperour *Zeno* publiſh'd his *ἐνώπιον* in which he
made the *Nicene Creed* to be the medium of Ca-
tholick Communion, and although he liv'd after
the Council of *Chalcedon*, yet he made not the
Decrees of that Council an inſtrument of its
reſtraint and limit, as preferring the peace of
Chriſtendom, and the union of charity far be-
fore a forced or pretended unity of perſuaſion,
which never was or ever will be real and ſub-
ſtantial; and although it were very convenient
if it could be had, yet it is therefore not neces-
ſary becauſe it is impoſſible; and if men pleaſe,
what ever advantages to the publick would be
conſequent to it, may be ſupply'd by a charita-
ble compliance and mutual permiſſion of opini-
on, and the offices of a brotherly affection pre-
ſcrib'd us by the Laws of Chriſtianity: And we
have ſeen it, that all Sects of Chriſtians, when
they have an end to be ſerv'd upon a third,
have permitted that liberty to a ſecond, which
we now contend for, and which they formerly
denied, but now grant, that by joyning hands,
they might be ſtronger to deſtroy the third.
The *Arrians* and *Meletians* joyned againſt the
Catholicks: The Catholicks and *Novatians* joyn-
ed againſt the *Arrians*. Now if men would do
that for charity which they do for intereſt, it
were handſomer and more ingenious; For that
A a 2 they

they do permit each others disagreeings for their own interest's ſake, convinces them of the lawfulness of the thing, or elſe the unlawneſs of their own proceedings, and therefore it were better they would ſerve the ends of charity than of faction, for then that good end would hallow the proceeding and make it both more prudent and moſt pious, while it ſerves the deſign of religious purpoſes.

S E C T. XXII.

That particular Men may communicate with Churches of different perſuaſions, and how far they may do it.

Numb. 1.

AS for the duty of particular men in the Queſtion of communicating with Churches of different perſuaſions, it is to be regulated according to the Laws of thoſe Churches; for if they require no impiety, or any thing unlawful as the condition of their Communion, then they communicate with them as they are Servants of Chriſt, as Diſciples of his Doctrine and Subjects to his Laws, and the particular diſtinguiſhing Doctrine of his Sect hath no influence or communication with him who from another Sect is willing to communicate with all the Servants of their Common Lord: For ſince no Church of one name is infallible, a wiſe Man may have either the miſfortune or a reaſon to believe of every one in particular, that ſhe errs in ſome Article or other, either he cannot communicate with any, or elſe he may communicate with all, that do not make

a ſin or the profeſſion of an error to be the condition of their Communion. And therefore, as every particular Church is bound to Tolerate diſagreeing perſons in the ſenſes and for the reaſons above explicated; ſo every particular perſon is bound to Tolerate her, that is, not to reſuſe her Communion when he may have it upon innocent conditions: For what is it to me if the Greek Church denies Proceſſion of the third Perſon from the ſecond, ſo ſhe will give me the right hand of Fellowſhip, (though I affirm it) therefore becauſe I profeſs the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and retain all matters of Faith and neceſſity? But this thing will ſcarce be reduced to practice, for few Churches that have framed bodies of Confeſſion, and Articles will endure any perſon that is not of the ſame confeſſion; which is a plain demonſtration that ſuch bodies of Confeſſion and Articles do much hurt, by becomming inſtruments of ſeparating and dividing Communion, and making unneceſſary or uncertain propoſitions a certain means of Schiſm and Diſunion: But then men would do well to conſider whether or no ſuch proceedings do not derive the guilt of Schiſm upon them who leaſt think it, and whether of the two is the Schiſmatick? he that makes unneceſſary and (ſuppoſing the ſtate of things) inconvenient impositions, or he that diſobeys them, becauſe he cannot without doing violence to his conſcience believe them? He that parts Communion, becauſe without ſin he could not entertain it, or they that have made it neceſſary for him to ſeparate, by requiring ſuch conditions which to man are ſimply neceſſary, and to his particular are either ſinful or impoſſible?

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The Sum of all is this, There is no ſecurity in any thing or to any perſon, but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither ſin nor error does impede it from producing its proportionate and intended effect: becauſe it is a direct deletery to ſin and an excuſe to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmleſs. And indeed this is the intendment and deſign of Faith: For (that we may joyn both ends of this Diſcourſe together) therefore certain Articles are preſcribed to us and propounded to our underſtanding, that ſo we might be ſupplied with inſtructions, with motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Chriſt. So that obedience is juſt ſo conſequent to Faith, as the acts of will are to the dictates of the underſtanding: Faith therefore being in order to obedience, and ſo far excellent as it ſelf is a part of obedience or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it; it is evident that if obedience and a good life be ſecured upon the moſt reaſonable and proper grounds of Chriſtianity, that is, upon the Apoſtles Creed, then Faith alſo is ſecur'd. Since whatſoever is beſide the duties, the order of a good life, cannot be a part of Faith, becauſe upon Faith, a good life is built; all other Articles by not being neceſſary, are no otherwiſe to be requir'd, but as they are to be obtain'd and found out, that is morally, and fallibly, and humanely; It is fit all truths be promoted fairly and properly, and yet but few Articles preſcribed Magiſterially, nor framed into Symbols and bodies of Confession; leaſt of all after ſuch compoſures, ſhould men proceed
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ſo furiously as to ſay all diſagreeing after ſuch declarations to be damnable for the future, and capital for the preſent. But this very thing is reaſon enough to make men more limited in their preſcriptions, becauſe it is more charitable in ſuch ſuppoſitions ſo to do.

But in the thing it ſelf, becauſe few kinds *Numb. 3.* of errors are damnable, it is reaſonable as few ſhould be capital. And becauſe every thing that is damnable in it ſelf and before Gods Judgment Seat, is not diſcernable before men (and queſtions diſputable are of this condition) it is alſo very reaſonable that fewer be capital than what are damnable, and that ſuch Queſtions ſhould be permitted to men to believe becauſe they muſt be left to God to judge. It concerns all perſons to ſee that they do their beſt to find out truth, and if they do, it is certain that let the error be never ſo damnable, they ſhall eſcape the error or the miſery of being damn'd for it. And if God will not be angry at men for being invincibly deceiv'd, why ſhould men be angry one at another? For he that is moſt diſpleaſed at another mans error, may alſo be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his underſtanding: For if he may fail in what he can chuſe, he may alſo fail in what he cannot chuſe: His underſtanding is no more ſecur'd than his will, nor his Faith more than his obedience. It is his own fault if he offends God in either but whatſoever is not to be avoided; as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the beſt and moſt inquiſitive of men, are not offences againſt God, and therefore not to be puniſhed, or reſtrained by men; but all ſuch opinions in which the publick intereſts of the
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Common-wealth, and the Foundation of Faith, and a good life, are not concerned, are to be permitted freely, *Quisque abundet in ſenſu ſuo* was the Doctrine of St. Paul, and that is Argument and Conclusion too; and they were excellent words which St. Ambroſe ſaid in attestation of this great truth, *Nec Imperiale eſt libertatem dicendi negare, nec ſacerdotale quod ſentias non dicere.*

“ΑΥΘ ΙΧΥΡΘ.

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FINIS

